TRADE UNIONS:

THEIR ORIGIN AND OBJECTS, INFLUENCE AND EFFICACY.

BY WILLIAM TRANT, M. A.

WITH AN APPENDIX SHOWING THE

HISTORY AND AIMS

OF THE

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR;

FOLLOWED BY A BRIEF SKETCH OF THE

GROWTH, BENEFITS, AND ACHIEVEMENTS

OF THE

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONS OF AMERICA

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PREFACE.

To the officers and members of all Trade and Labor Unions, and to that much abused but serviceable class of Humanitarians—the despised "Labor Agitators"—this pamphlet is respectfully dedicated, with the hope that a perusal of its pages may make the subject of Trade Unions better understood and more thoroughly appreciated.

The five opening chapters of this pamphlet are condensed from the prize essay on "Trade Unions," written by Mr. Wm. Trant, who secured for it the £50 prize offered a few years ago by the Trade Union Congress of Great Britain. It is a standard work, prepared after considerable research, and it has been carefully edited to suit American conditions.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR.

TRADE UNIONS.

THEIR ORIGIN AND OBJECTS, INFLUENCE AND EFFICACY.

By William Trant.

CHAPTER I.—Historical Sketch.

Serfdom—Emancipation—The Domestic System—The "Capitalistic Craftsman"—The Working Class The First Crisis—The Statutes of Laborers—The Black Death—High Wages, Cheap Food, and Short Hours—Combination—Guilds—The First Union—Rise of the Artisan—The Lollards—Antagonism of the Wealthy—The Peasants' Revolt—Oppression of the Working Classes—Debasement of the Coin—Confiscation of the Guilds—Combination Laws—The Poor Laws—Continued Decline of the Workman—His Miserable Condition in the Nineteenth Century—Trade Unions Their Original Rules—Combinations of Employers.

Those who so often speak of the "welfare of the State" would do well to remember that the phrase has never yet meant the "welfare of the people." The "good old times" were good only for a small portion of the community, and although year after year has shown constant improvement, yet that amelioration has been very slow and lamentably imperfect. Aristotle says, in his "Politics," that the best and most perfect commonwealth is one which provides for the happiness of *all* its members. The fact that the great philosopher conceived such a noble sentiment so long ago is in itself remarkable; but admiration for his wisdom is somewhat diminished when it is found that, "although artisans and trades of every kind are necessary to a State, they are not parts of it," and their happiness, therefore, is of a kind with which the "best and most perfect commonwealth" has no concern whatever.

"The same law must be for all classes of my subjects," said Henry II., but laborers were not considered subjects. So late as Elizabeth's time they were spoken of (by Shakespeare) as "fragments." Even the Magna Charta, of which Englishmen are so justly proud, referred but to a moiety of the two millions of persons who inhabited England at the time of its promulgation. It affected freemen alone, and there is little doubt that nearly one-half of the entire population was then in a state of slavery so abject that, in the language of the old law-writers, "the villein* knew not in the evening what he was to do in the morning, but was bound to do whatever he was commanded." He was liable to beating, he was incapable of acquiring property for himself, and any he got became his master's; he could be separated from his wife and children, and sold to another lord, or he could be passed with the land upon which he lived, as if he had been a chattel attached to it.

Various causes noiselessly and gradually effaced this miserable condition, though at a very slow rate. "Faint traces of it," says Lord Macaulay, "were detected by the curious, so late as the days of the Stuarts; nor has that institution[villenage], even to this hour, been abolished by statute." From the earliest times, however, serfdom in England bore within it the germs of its own destruction. The lord might enfranchise his villein, or the latter could purchase his freedom. If, too, the slave escaped to some town, and remained t[illegible]em, unclaimed a year and a day, he be[illegible]d to a free man. There were also difficult[illegible] the way of proving the villenage, the [illegible] of which proof always lay with the l[illegible]he while in all disputes on the subject the p[illegible]e sumption of law was in favor of liberty.

"Thus," writes Creasy, "while at the period when we first can assert the common law of the complete English nation to commence, we find this species of slavery so widely established in this country, we also find the law for its gradual and ultimately certain extinction." The Church, too, discountenanced slavery. Theodore denied Christian burial to the kidnappers, and prohibited the sale of children by their parents after the age of seven. Violation of the prohibition was punished with excom-

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* "Villein" was a term to denote the serf or worker in those days.

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munication. The murder of a slave by his owner, though no crime in the eye of the State, became a sin for which penance was exacted by the Church. The slaves attached to Church property were freed, and manumission became frequent in wills, as the clergy taught that such a gift was a boon to the soul of the dead.

With half a nation in slavery there could be no "working class," as the term is generally understood. The wealthy kept domestic artisans amongst their servants, and the wants of the nobles were almost entirely supplied by their retainers. The villeins tilled the soil, while the men in towns worked on what is now called the "domestic system." The factory system and the capitalist employer were not yet known, and the employers of labor were those who provided materials which they hired men to work into the articles required. The glazier glazed, but did not find the glass; the blacksmith forged, but did not find the iron. There was, therefore, very little hiring of laborers. "The capitalist employer," says Professor Thorold Rogers in "Six Centuries of Labor and Wages," "the first middle man, is entirely unknown till the seventeenth century; and the capitalist purchaser of raw materials, the second middle man, is later still in the economy of society.

At a very early date, however, craftsmen became the chief purchasers of the materials on which they worked, and the "capitalist artisan" developed considerably in the sixteenth century. The London tailors, even in the reign of Edward III., were the great importers of woolen cloths, and there can be no doubt that at this time many of the craftsmen traded in the raw material which they worked, As, however, the trades became more prosperous, and the poor, who flocked to the towns, more numerous, the traders gradually ceased working at their craft, and, confining themselves to trading, left the manual labor to their less fortunate companions. That is to say, a class of dealers in raw material sprang into ence. The distinction of classes be- marked. The shoemaker soon learnt k down upon the cobbler, and the er merchant to despise the shoemaker. The "full history of England as a na- on," it is agreed, begins in the reign of Henry II., and it is thenabouts that we find anything like a working class gathering itself together. In the three centuries which immediately succeeded the Norman Conquest, the commerce of England was greatly extended. Foreign commodities were "introduced in abundance, and native manufactures established and improved." This naturally attracted to the towns such serfs as wished for liberty, and thus we find springing up in the towns a class of men possessed of personal freedom, but destitute of property and land. These were the forerunners of the wage-working class.

The Statute of Laborers (23 Ed. III., c. 1) clearly shows the existence of a wage-receiving class, the remuneration being about one penny a day in addition to food; and when it is remembered that the sum mentioned was sufficient to purchase a couple of fowls or the fifth part of a sheep, it is evident that the recipients were well off as things went. Indeed, the statute referred to was passed because, in the opinion of the landholders, the wages of agricultural laborers had become "excessive." Here was, in fact, the first "crisis" on record between employers and employed in England. The depopulation (amounting, it is said, to one-third of the nation) which followed the great plague of 1348, the "Black Death," caused a natural rise in the price of labor. Whole villages died out; houses fell in ruins; entire flocks perished for want of herdsmen; and the corn crop perished for wants of reapers. The clergy even raised their fees for masses and prayers, because fewer persons were able to afford such luxuries; merchants and tradesmen took advantage of the small supply of wares to raise their prices; and in like manner the workmen endeavored to profit by the dearth of labor, by refusing to work except at enormous prices. The wealthy class objected to all this, and the purpose of the Act referred to was to fix the wages, by requiring all laborers, etc., to accept the same remuneration as had been customary before the plague. Any lord of the manor paying more was to be mulcted in treble damages; food was to be sold at reasonable prices; and alms were forbidden to able-bodied laborers. The statute, however, seems to have been disregarded; and two years later we find the master shearmen of London complaining to the city authorities that they could not get men at the same wages as formerly, and that the workmen also refused to work unless they were paid by the piece.

There had, indeed, already been something of the nature of a "strike," and it was, therefore, ordered that any further disputes should be settled by the warden of the trade. If a workman did not submit, he was to be punished by the mayor and aldermen. All, however, was of no avail, and what is also surprising is the obtuseness that could for a moment imagine the Act could be enforced. The statute had to be enforced by the Manor Court, and that court depended for efficiency upon the good will existing between landlord and tenant; and where statute prices were paid the difference was made up in some other way. Professor Rogers has recently brought to light some curious instances of evasions of the Act, by the

alterations in the record of the court from the price actually paid to the statute prices; alterations evidently made to technically conform to the law, while actually evading it. At last the peasants combined to resist the law. They organize themselves, and they subscribe considerable sums of money for the defence and protection of serfs, which, it has been suggested, may have included the payment of fines. In point of fact, here is a rudimentary trade union to resist an unjust law and to secure higher wages. A similar statute to the one above quoted was passed in 1362, when, after a violent tempest, a royal order was issued that the materials for roofing and the wages of tilers should not be enhanced by reason of the damage done by the storm. An additional statute, with a similar object, was passed the following year.

From these sources, and from the industrious researches of Professor Thorold Rogers, we learn what were the wages earned at the period before the rise set in.

It will be sufficient to say here that they were not satisfactory, though not so meagre as has been generally supposed. The Acts, however, were disregarded, the men refusing to work for less than double or treble the sums prescribed by statute. For about a dozen years wages continued to rise, until in 1363 the prosperity of the peasantry was so great that an Act (37 Edward III., c. 14) was passed enjoining carters, ploughmen, and farm servants generally, not to eat or drink "excessively," or to wear any cloth except "blanket and russet wool of twelvepence," while domestic servants were declared to be entitled to only one meal a day of flesh and fish, and were to content themselves at other meals with "milk, butter, cheese, and other such victuals."* These restrictions were as futile as those which preceded them, and it would be foolish to weary the reader with an account of similar legislation effected during the succeeding century, in spite of which, however, wages constantly advanced; and we find an Act passed in the reign of Richard II. stating that laborers would not work except at a rate "much more than hath been given to such servants and laborers in any time past." Indeed, they were the halcyon days of the British laborer. He was much better off then than he is now. The rise in the wages of labor after the famine of Edward II. was as much as from twenty-three per cent. to thirty per cent.; and after the Black Death in the following reign the average advance was upwards of fifty per cent. more. The masons succeeded in obtaining an advance of sixty per cent., the reason of which will be given immediately. Great, too, as was the rise in wages, there was no corresponding rise in the price of provisions. Everything the laborer needed was as cheap as it ever had been, his labor was rising in value week by week, and he worked only eight hours a day. Never before or since have the workingmen of England been so well off as far as material comforts were concerned, and this halcyon period lasted until 1390.

It will be necessary further on to trace the reasons of the downward tendency that began to show itself in that year; and to show how it was that laborers who had become masters of the situation were again degraded to the level of serfs. It would be interesting to inquire whether any "union" or "combination" had given the men strength to resist the injustice which the Acts just mentioned inflicted upon them by curbing the "aspiring exertions of industry and independency." Materials upon which to found a decided opinion are, unfortunately, very scarce. One thing, however, is certain. The people of England had long been familiar with the principle of association for trade and other purposes. Even so early as the time of Canute, associations under the name of "guilds" were established for religious purposes. Similar brotherhoods afterwards developed into combinations of merchants for mutual assistance and protection, and were followed in the fourteenth century by "craft-guilds," which, as their name implies, were unions of handicraftsmen—the principal guild being that of the weavers. The very essence of the guilds was mutual support, mutual protection, and mutual responsibility. They were, indeed, the first friendly societies. These guilds gradually extended their influence beyond the limits of particular trades, and ultimately became far more powerful than the municipal corporations of the present day. The notions of the members of the guilds were of a very exclusive nature in regard to the admission of members. No *villeins* were permitted to join them, and all freemen who were proposed had to be duly elected.

The noblest of all the guilds of the Middle Ages was undoubtedly that of the masons. This brotherhood rose from the circumstances in which the travelling builders of the Middle Ages found themselves placed. "They were brought together from distant homes to be employed for a considerable time on such great works as our mediæval churches and cathedrals. Near the rising structure on which they were engaged it was necessary that they should provide for themselves a common shed or tabernacle." This was the original masons' "lodge." Before all things it was necessary that masons should be "free and accepted." The entrance into this guild, as indeed into all others, was, in ac-

*In Scotland, at a much later date, farm laborers complained that they had to eat salmon more than four days a week.

cordance with the spirit of the times, surrounded by mysterious rites and ceremonies, and all such societies had their peculiar lore and traditions. Their original intentions have long ago been disregarded. All that remains of the masons' guild is the now fashionable order of "Freemasons," and of the others the rich livery companies of London and the guilds of elsewhere, who now spend their dying moments, as they inaugurated their existence centuries ago, at dinner.*

The exclusiveness of the guilds naturally separated still more the incipient working class from their well-to-do superiors, and tended more and more to give the workmen separate views and interests, which were not infrequently antagonistic to those of the employer or "master." When two or three are gathered with identical interests (and those interests opposed to the wishes of their employers, who are already combined), it seems so natural for them to form a combination of some sort or other that it is impossible to resist the belief that in the fourteenth century the working man—excluded from the guild—would unite with his fellows, if not for general, yet for specific objects in connection with his condition. It is gratifying to learn that this view is taken by so high an authority as Dr. Lujo Brentano, who also points out that, at about the time referred to, accounts of "strikes in the building trade are particularly numerous;" and there is in existence a "royal mandate as to the workmen who have withdrawn from the palace of Westminster." Indeed, it is beyond dispute that the masons of the fourteenth century maintained a higher rate of wages than was paid to other crafts, as has been above mentioned, solely on account of the combination these artisans were able to effect; a fact that non-unionists of to day would do well to remember.

This view is strengthened by the fact that in 1383 the authorities of the city of London issued a proclamation forbidding all "congregations, covins, and conspiracies of workmen;" and four years later three shoemakers were carried off to Newgate for violating it; while in 1396 a similar coalition of saddlers was suppressed. Two laws also were enacted against combinations, congregations, and chapters of workmen (which had been established to limit the number of working hours), viz., the 34 Edward IV., c. 9, and 3 Henry VI., c. 1. The punishments inflicted upon working men for combining were very severe, and yet they combined in spite of such punishments. The endeavors of the laborers to raise wages showed themselves most prominently in the trades in which, as in the cloth manufacturers, development was most rapidly progressing, and in which there existed a large working class.

The prosperity of the laborers and artisans produced events that alarmed the privileged classes. The emancipation of the serfs had for some time past proceeded very rapidly, from causes which have been already indicated. Professor Thorold Rogers, after an enormous amount of research, writes of the fourteenth century, "In the many thousands of bailiffs and manor rolls which I have read, I have never met with a single instance of the sale of a serf, nor have I discovered any labor rent for which an equitable money payment could not be substituted." Indeed, during the reign of Edward II., the practice became general of accepting money compensation in lieu of labor rents; and at the end of a quarter of a century the rule had become almost universal. The improvement in the condition of the serfs created an amount of independence among them that had the happiest results.

Sir Robert Sale, Captain-General of Norwich in 1381, was the son of a villein, was born a serf, as was also Grostête, the great Oxford scholar of the thirteenth century, thus showing that even in those days serfs could rise to very high positions. There is abundant evidence, too, that they became possessed of property, and indeed, as they became enfranchised, they also became copyholders. It is certain they paid rent, which indicates a real bargain between the lord and the serf which the former could not break if the other satisfied his dues; and he could recover wages due to him from his lordly employer by distraint upon his goods, even upon his chattels, and therefore could not be a chattel himself. The impetus given to this process by the general rise after the Black Death was brief, and that plague, in short, emancipated almost the whole of the surviving serfs.

It was, therefore, amongst a prosperous and independent class that Wiklif's "Poor Priests," or Lollards, followed by John Ball, also a priest, preached doctrines that in those days were revolutionary doctrines, and, in the eyes of some people, are so still. From village to village the old couplet was repeated:

> "When Adam delved and Eve span,
> Who was then the gentleman?"

The people were taught that those who labored, did so not only for themselves, but to enable others to live without labor, or to live by mischievous labor. The "equality" expounded in the Bible was explained to them, and generally it was impressed upon them that they were oppressed by a privileged class whom accident, fraud, or force had placed in a superior social sphere.

* It is gratifying to find that now some of the livery companies are devoting a portion of their funds to useful puposes, such as the promotion of technical education, etc.

The men were not starving, and had time to listen and to think, and, above all things, to combine. And they did combine. They subscribed money; they shielded the escaped serf from the pursuit of his lord; the serf and the free joined in a common cause, and waited but the signal to "strike" against their enemies. The sign was at length given, and the result was, on the 10th of June, 1381, the Peasants' Revolt, or Wat Tyler's Rebellion. This was a rising caused, not by the outrage on Tyler's daughter, or even the poll tax, but by the general attempts by the upper classes to force down the wages of the laborers of England, and to take from them the rights they had won, though of course other grievances would not be forgotten. In all risings for a particular object, the opportunity is seized of making many demands. For the particulars of that revolt the reader is referred to the history of the period. The rebellion nearly succeeded, but the laborers were cajoled into quietude.

From this time forward for three centuries the history of the laboring class is a sad story. The governing powers never forgave the Lollards, nor those who listened to them. They seized every opportunity of crushing the people, and it is only recently that policy has been departed from. It is not too much to say that from this time to 1824, in the words of the author already quoted, "a conspiracy concocted by the law, and carried out by parties interested in its success, was entered into to cheat the English workman of his wages, to tie him to the soil, to deprive him of age, and to degrade him into irreparable poverty." The first of these repressive measures was the debasement of the coin by Henry VIII. and the guardians of Edward VI. The nefarious transactions by which this was brought about had for their object the replenishment of the royal coffers out of the earnings of the artisans and laborers, and they succeeded in that object. The peasantry were already impoverished by the action of the landowners in substituting sheep-farming for agriculture, and the new state of affairs oppressed them with great severity.

The purchasing power of the revenue fell to one-third of its original capacity, and the consequent rise in prices was one and a half. In other words, if wages rose from 6*d.* to 9*d.* a day, the laborers had to pay 3*s.* for meat, 2*s.* 5*d.* for bread, and 2*s.* 6*d.* for butter and cheese, where he had paid 1*s.* before. This, it is obvious, put back the laborer into a position of penury to which he had not been accustomed, and to which he did not readily submit. His condition was again almost that of the serf. From childhood to old age all was labor. Eight hours no longer constituted a day's work. His miserable condition was rendered worse by the dissolution of the monasteries that accompanied the debasement of the coin. A great part of the vast funds of the monasteries was devoted to the relief of the poor, and to their assistance in many ways. When this was withdrawn, no substitute was provided in its place. These transactions were followed by the confiscation of the property of the guilds. I have described them as the first Friendly Societies. The guilds assisted the artisan in times of difficulty, allowed him loans without interest, and granted benefits to his widow. The effect of the confiscation of the guilds was the same as would result from the confiscation of the funds of the Friendly Societies; and it is worth noting, as an argument in favor of strong union, that only the provincial guilds were molested, those in London being so powerful that the Crown dared not molest them.

The working men resisted these oppressions, and vigorous measures were passed to force them into submission. An Act was passed in the reign of Edward VI., which shows pretty plainly what was thought in those days of the "working classes." If a man refused to work at statute prices, he was branded with the letter V (vagabond), and reduced to slavery for two years. If he attempted to escape from that condition, he was branded with S, and became a slave for life; and if he objected to that state, he was hanged. It is also evident that the spirit of combination was growing amongst the laborers and artisans, for the laws against workmen's combinations were made still more stringent than hitherto. The preamble of 2d and 3d Edward VI., cap. 15 (A.D. 1548), set forth that "artificers, handicraftsmen, and laborers had made confederacies and promises, and have sworn mutual oaths, not only that they should not meddle with one another's work, and perform and finish what another hath begun, but also to constitute and appoint how much they shall do in a day, and what hours and times they shall work, contrary to the laws and statutes of this realm, and to the great impoverishment of his Majesty's subjects." Anyone convicted for the third time of having joined such a combination had his ear cut off, and altogether the punishments were very severe.

It may be gathered, then, that the principle of combination amongst the workpeople was rapidly progressing, and was met under the Tudors and Stuarts in a spirit which, it is to be regretted, is not wholly extinct at the present day, as recent events have shown.

It is not surprising that this state of affairs should have impressed the thinking minds of the period; and that the causes and remedies should be considered. Statesmen and persons of influence began to ac-

knowledge the justice of the demands of the workpeople. In Sir Thomas More's *Utopia* the great statesman advocates almost all the reforms that have taken place since his day, and many that have not yet been accomplished. Indeed, as Mr. J. R. Green points out, "In his treatment of the question of labor he still remains far in advance of current opinion. The whole system of society around him seemed to him 'nothing but a conspiracy of the rich against the poor.' Its economic legislation was simply the carrying out of such a conspiracy by process of law. The rich are ever striving to pare away something further from the daily wages of the poor by private fraud, and even by public law, so that the wrong already existing (for it is a wrong that those from whom the State derives most benefit should receive least reward) is made yet greater by means of the law of the State.

"The rich devise every means by which they may in the first place secure to themselves what they have amassed by wrong, and then take to their own use and profit at the lowest possible price the work and labor of the poor." The result was the wretched existence to which the labor class was doomed—"a life so wretched that even a beast's life seems enviable." More then gives his remedies. The end of labor laws, he says, should be the welfare of the laborer. Labor should be compulsory with all. Unless a man work, neither shall he eat. Even in those days, 1516, More demanded that the period of toil should be shortened to nine hours, with a view to the intellectual improvement of the worker: there must be also, he pleaded, "a public system of education," comfortable homes for the people, complete toleration and equality of all religions, and much more in the same strain.

I do not suppose that any book that was ever written has done so much for the working classes as the *Utopia*, written by the proposer of the nine hours system more than three hundred years ago. The general progress of civilization, even, had its drawbacks as regards the humbler classes. The general diffusion of the art of printing, the great geographical discoveries effected in the sixteenth century, and the general activity which prevailed throughout Europe immediately after the Reformation, gave a great stimulus to trade and commerce, the effects of which were long felt. This, of course, had a beneficial influence. It had, however, some drawbacks. Amongst them may be mentioned that in the seventeenth century the practice of setting children prematurely to work prevailed to a very large extent. At Norwich, the chief seat of the clothing trade, children began to work at six years old, and earned not the "insignificant trifle" which was paid to the little sufferers forty years ago, but very much more than was necessary for their own sustenance. In the opposition which was shown at the time to this inhumanity is to be discerned the dawn of the Factory Acts, and of the opposition which was subsequently offered by Trade Unions to the overworking of youths and children.

I must mention another kind of legislation that emphasized the evils already indicated. A state of affairs had been produced which created a class who required not only work, but food, and it was sought to remedy the evil by the enactment of poor laws. I must refer the reader elsewhere for an account of statutes whose chief result was the manufacture of paupers, and whose only effect could be to make the poor, poorer. It will be sufficient to say here that the Justices in quarter sessions *had the power to fix wages, a power* that continued under legal sanction till 1812. Naturally they were fixed at the lowest possible figure, the Justices knowing full well that any deficiency would be paid out of the poor rates, to which all occupiers—that is, the country at large—would be obliged to contribute. There could be but one result from this. Wages would continually fall, and the amount of poor relief as continually rise. As a consequence, the time would ultimately arrive when it would require the whole of the rent from land in order to relieve the poor. Indeed, that condition was being approached and would undoubtedly have been reached but for the discovery of steam power and machine weaving, which, as will appear later on, created a great demand for labor and raised wages.

In spite of all these difficulties, however, the men continued to combine, and the legislature to pass laws against combination. The revolution of 1688 gave no liberties to the artisans and the peasants. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it was ordained that "journeymen should make no unlawful assemblies, brotherhoods, congregations, and flockings together." The Act of 2 and 3 Ed. VI., c. 15 (see *ante*, p. 7) was confirmed by 22–23 Charles II., and remained in force until repealed by 6 Geo. IV., c. 129. The stringent laws, too, to which workingmen were subjected after the Restoration, rendered their position far from comfortable or just. As if the statutes were not sufficiently rigorous, the construction of the existing laws, the offence of conspiracy, originally referring to combinations for the purpose of procuring false evidence, or of committing some crime, was extended to associations of workmen whose purpose was to raise wages. Even so late as the end of the last century the farm laborer had no right to sell his labor in the best market, but was compelled to work for any employer in his parish who chose to demand his services at a price fixed by statute. It was not until 1795 that a work-

man could legally travel in search of employment out of his own parish. In 1545 the City of London complained that the importation of foreign manufactures was ruining the country, and demanded low wages as a remedy. In 1680 there was, as there is now, the cry that if we paid our artisans high wages we should be unable to compete with foreign countries. In that year Mr. John Bassett, the member for Barnstaple, remarked that it was impossible for our textures to maintain a competition with the produce of the Indian looms.

"An English mechanic," he said, "instead of slaving like a native of Bengal for a piece of copper, exacted a shilling a day." Although this amount is equivalent to only about one-half of the present rate of wages, there were even then, as indeed there always have been, attempts to reduce the amount; and there is ample evidence that so long ago as when the above words were spoken there was "the vehement and bitter cry of labor against capital." "For so miserable a recompense," wrote Lord Macaulay on the aforesaid one shilling a day, "were the producers of wealth compelled to toil, rising early and lying down late, while the master clothier, eating, sleeping, and idling, became rich by their exertions."

From the earliest times until the present day, then, employers have endeavored to pay their men as little as possible for as many hours' work as they could possibly get out of them. In this task the masters have ever been assisted by a Parliament of sympathizing friends—a Parliament which has always yielded reluctantly to any measure calculated to improve the masses, but has greedily accepted any proposal to benefit the few at the cost of many; and although the onward and upward march of civilization has rendered such conduct less easy in the present day, yet still there is the old tendency to legislate as though the capitalist were entitled to all the plums and the laborer to all the kicks.

The numerous attempts to fix wages by Act of Parliament were nearly all failures. The assessment of weavers' wages by the Justices had fallen into disuse before 1720. In that year the Justices reasserted the authority they possessed, and fixed wages, but their injunctions were disregarded. So late as 1768 an Act was passed compelling the London tailors to work from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m., with an interval of one hour only for refreshments. The same Act also fixed the wages of the clothworker at 2*s.* 7*d.* a day. Either master or servant was liable to imprisonment for two months for violating these rules; and a master was further liable to a fine of £500 if he employed workmen who lived more than five miles from London. In 1795 the Berkshire magistrates at Speenhamland declared that wages should rise or fall with the price of bread, and themselves fixed the rates. Numerous Acts were passed about this time regulating, or rather interfering with, the most minute details of manufacturing industry. To stimulate the Macclesfield trade it was enacted that no "buttons or button-holes made of cloth, serge, drugget, frieze, camlet, or any other stuffs, should be made, set, or bound on clothes, or worn;" and the bare enumeration of similar legislation would occupy more space than is at present at disposal. The attempts to keep wages down were supported by statesmen who ought to have known better. Pitt, Fox, and Whitbread distinctly asserted the unjust and pernicious doctrine that a laborer's remuneration should be proportioned, not to his services, but to his wants, and in 1796 the magistrates in Berkshire attempted to "settle the incomes of the industrious poor." The liberty of operatives was still further restricted at the close of the eighteenth century, by an Act of Parliament which declared to be illegal, all contracts, except between masters and men, for obtaining advances of wages, altering the usual time of working, decreasing the quantity of work.

It is difficult to conceive, in the face of all this, how the condition of the workingman has improved in the slightest degree. Indeed, it has not increased proportionally. He has certainly been enveloped, so to speak, in the general progress of affairs; he has doubtless shared somewhat in the national prosperity; but whatever improvement has taken place in the condition of the working classes, does not all correspond with the improvement which has taken place in the middle and upper classes. In regard to the agricultural laborer the case is very bad. In 1740 a Suffolk laborer could buy for 5*s.*, what in 1801 cost him 26*s.* 5*d.* As Professor Rogers says, "For five centuries and a half, for fifteen, sixteen generations, there was no appreciable alteration in the condition of the people." It remained stationary, where it did not deteriorate, from Henry III. to George III. The condition to-day of the laborer in the agricultural districts of England, and the instances which are reported of the conduct of the employed, speak of misery and oppression worthy of the Tudors and the Stuarts. Down to 1779 the condition of the miners in Scotland was literally one of serfdom. They were obliged to remain in the pit as long as the owner chose to keep them there, and they were actually sold as part of the capital invested in the work. If they took work elsewhere, their master could always have them fetched back and flogged as thieves for having robbed him of their labor. It is no wonder that in 1745 the magistrates of Lancashire were alarmed at the symptoms of combination and disaffection, and once again resorted to an

attempt to fix wages in spite of past experiences.

It were tedious to mention the various events which have ruffled the career of the laborer during the last century. It is often stated that wages had gradually risen and food had cheapened. This, however, is a mistake. From 1800 until after the repeal of the Corn Laws the state of the laborer seems never to have been in its natural condition. During that period wages were never high, and at times the distress was very great. England was then (1810–1812) in anything but an enviable position. On the Continent the hand of every nation was against her, and her hand was against every nation. She was at war with all the empires she had not subsidized in the Old World, and her arms were struggling with her own offspring in the New World, as well as fighting a war of oppression in the Indies. These wars, which lasted for a quarter of a century, spread misery like a pall over the land. Trade was paralyzed; foreign ports, both in Europe and America, were closed to us, and by a pig-headed policy* our ports were closed to them. There was not work for anybody, and nearly everybody, therefore, was starving. Just at this time an event took place which, although a great blessing, and known to be so at the time by far-sighted men, was not unaccompanied by those disasters which generally accompany great changes. While nearly all men were out of work, capitalists began to introduce into the manufacturing districts labor-saving machines, which dispensed with seven out of every eight handworkers. This was the last straw.

The men were in no humor for reasoning on the principles of political economy. They were starving; and to their eyes the new machinery cut off every chance of their ever working again. They formed the strongest and most secret combination ever known in this country. Their object was to destroy the new machines, and for three years the havoc they committed, especially in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and Nottinghamshire, was immense. It was not until enormous powers were granted to the military, the magistracy, and the police, that the conspiracy was brought to an end by the execution of thirty of the ringleaders.†

Such was the miserable condition of the laborers, and their meagre powers of combination, at the dawn of the nineteenth century. Everywhere the combination laws were in full force; the truck system was almost universally established, and still further, to make the workman dependent, he was paid at long intervals; and any advances kindly made to him by a generous employer were charged for at the rate of 200 per cent. per annum. Add to these the fact that the men were kept at work sixteen hours out of every twenty-four, and it will be no matter of surprise that they were driven to defy the cruel and unjust laws which oppressed them, and to carry out their object, not only in the most natural of all ways, but by the means with which they were most familiar, namely, by combination.

The progress of industry at last rendered this imperative. The application of steam power to the processes of manufacture, followed by the inventions of Arkwright, Crompton, Hargreaves, at the close of the eighteenth century, and others, had almost annihilated the domestic system of manufacturing. Hitherto weaving had been carried on in private houses and in sheds adjoining them, as is still the case in some parts of Yorkshire, as, for instance, the villages about Huddersfield and Leeds. Apprentices lived with their masters as part of the family.* It was a common occurrence for the apprentice to marry his master's daughter, and enter into partnership with her father. With the improvement of machinery, however, when several looms were worked by one engine, the domestic system was supplanted by the factory system. The rapid production of new machines ruined the trade of the hand loom weaver. There can be no doubt that the introduction of machinery was *at first* extremely injurious to those whose means of living were affected—as, indeed, every improvement in machinery must injure those who are only able to keep in the old groove. By the invention of machinery the public, who paid less for their goods, and the manufacturers who produced more cloth for the same, or a less outlay, were the gainers. The old weavers were the only losers.†

I have said the men resorted to the means with which they were most familiar, viz., combination. Their experiences on this point have already been sketched, but now a new departure was made. In the beginning of last century the principle of the guilds had extended itself beyond the middle class, and had reached the working

* The notorious "Orders in Council."

† The "Luddite Rising," as the disaffection has been called, was intensified by the fact that, whereas the operatives were starving, the capitalists were hoarding. Mr. J. R. Green says: "The war enriched the landowner, the capitalist, the manufacturer, the farmer; but it impoverished the poor. It is, indeed, from the fatal years which lie between the Peace of Amiens and Waterloo that we must date that war of classes, that social severance between rich and poor, between employers and employed, which still forms the great difficulty of English politics."

* In 1806 there were above 100 such apprentices in Armley, a manufacturing village of between 4,000 and 5,000 inhabitants.

† This has always been the case. The objections in 1730 to the "new-fangled machine" (for winnowing) introduced into Scotland are well known.

classes. More correctly speaking, the capitalists had withdrawn, and left the men to organize and to promote their combination and organization. In 1703 the Watchmakers' Society and the Norman Society were established in London upon the principle of the present friendly societies; and, with others nearly as old, are still in existence. The example thus set was followed by the rapid promotion of similar societies. Such associations, however, were illegal, and their meetings were obliged to be held privately. The "Friendly Society of Iron Founders," which began in 1810, used to meet on dark nights on the peaty wastes and moors on the highlands of the Midland counties, and the archives of the society were buried in the peat. These societies have now ramifications all over the empire, and in England and Wales alone have funds amounting to upwards of £150,000.

It was customary at the beginning of this century for men from various factories to meet at taverns to pay their instalments into the friendly society, the benefit fund, or the burial club. At such gatherings the new state of affairs—as being the subject nearest every workman's heart—naturally became the common topic of conversation. Every phase of the question was thoroughly discussed, and the conduct of the several employers was freely criticized. The operatives naturally inquired why the hardest work and the least pay generally went together. They saw that everything around them was improving except their own condition, and this appeared to be deteriorating. At length some few who worked under a specially severe taskmaster would naturally rebel. They would agree or combine to resist the injustice and oppression under which they suffered. Their friends would not only sympathize with them, but, knowing not how soon they might be placed in a similar position, would help them in their fight, and thus, what was at first merely a chat over a glass of beer, soon became a trade union. "Men," says Mr. W. T. Thornton, "are seldom collected together in large masses without speedily discovering that union is strength, and men whose daily avocations obliged them to be constantly using, and by use to be constantly sharpening, their wits, were not likely to be backward in making this discovery."

The origin of the trade unions accounts for a great many of their peculiar features. As combining was illegal, the unions disguised themselves as friendly societies. In framing the rules the founders naturally looked at such models as they were already possessed of; and, as wiser men have done, they selected much that was bad as well as much that was good. It is a remarkable fact that those rules at present in existence in trade unions, which give so much offence to employers, are all actual copies of the rules of the ancient guilds, or reproductions of the provisions of ancient statutes. The workingmen invented no absurdities. It cannot be too often borne in mind that trade unions are as much a natural development as is the British Constitution itself, and it is as foolish to expect immediate perfection in the one as finality in the amendments already effected in the other. The history of the world teaches us that so universal is frailty that it is not until every variety of error has been passed through and exhausted that things at last settle into the right course.

The workingmen, therefore, cannot be blamed for not discovering that some of the rules they adopted were hardly consistent with the general progress of opinion, and it is greatly to their credit that experience has taught them better. The foolish rules are never introduced into new societies, and they are being gradually expunged from the rules of the old ones. This must necessarily be a work of time, because several of the old rules have at first sight an appearance of justice, and certainly contain within themselves much that would naturally commend itself to the workmen. Take, for instance, the rules relating to apprentices, in those trades to which no apprenticeship is needed. The rule limiting the number of apprentices is not only characteristic of almost all the guilds and of some of the statutes,* but was copied by the Inns of Court and the Universities, and is, moreover, one that would especially commend itself before the introduction of machinery. In the first place, there was, and is, the desire to limit the number of competitors as much as possible. With a market sufficiently well stocked with workmen, each new arrival would be regarded with great jealousy. Nor is there anything wrong in the notion of restricting the supply of laborers. The point where evil may creep in is found in the means taken to bring about such restrictions. A great authority like Mr. J. S. Mill urged upon the workingmen the necessity of restricting their numbers as a means of increasing their wages. The plan he recommended was the "prudential check" of Malthus.

What, however, seems easy and roseate to the philosopher often appears difficult, if not impracticable, to the ordinary mortal; and the last generation of British workmen took such steps as instantly occurred to them, or were suggested to them, and the results of which were actually before their eyes. Each man would say to himself, "The less number of workers in my trade the better it is for me." It requires a high state of development to perceive the various and intricate ways in which the laws of

* 5 Eliz., c. 4; 5 and 6 Ed. VI., c. 22; 1 James I.; c. 6.

production and distribution work so as to bring about the greatest happiness to the greatest number. Another point which would naturally occur to the workman would be that *he* taught the apprentice and received no remuneration. All the trouble and work of training the youth were left to the artisan, and when the pupil was perfect he at once competed with his teacher. During the whole of the seven years' apprenticeship the master received the benefits of the youth's extra labor, and of the premium that was sometimes paid with him, while the man who had borne the heat and burden of the day received no advantage whatever. The rule limiting the number of apprentices, then, was very attractive to the founders of trade unions. The improvements in machinery, however, are rapidly depriving the system of its utility. It may have required a long apprenticeship before a man could weave; it requires little to "mind a loom;" and therefore that rule of the trade unions, which is so often quoted by employers as exhibiting the arbitrary principle of the unions, had a natural birth, is dying a natural death, and will ere long be decently buried and duly forgotten.

The trade unions copied several other ancient provisions, such as the rules against systematic overtime. The guilds also forbade a member to work with a non-member. No member was to instruct another, and "no person of the mystery was to hire himself to a person of another mystery where greater wages were offered." "Rattening" (exactly similar to the Sheffield system, with the exception that in the old times it was legal, and now it is not) was practised against those persons who neglected to pay their subscriptions. The guilds had also their "black lists," and the word "donation," now applied to the money given to men "on tramp," is a translation of "Geo-chenk," the word given by the old German guilds to the workmen who were similarly tramping. These and other rules were copied into the codes of the new unions. They are rapidly becoming obsolete, and are not enforced at all in the iron industries. In these industries no fixed period of service is imposed on apprentices, nor is their number limited. The union men do not refuse to work with non-union men, and "rattening" is not allowed.

From this it is seen that, in the natural order of things, the early trade unionists selected rules which they now ignore. They also showed at times more of the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of a bygone age than one likes to see now. There have been intolerants in every creed, and it would be strange if trade unions had furnished an exception. Even the most partial inquirer would fail to detect any more intolerance in trade unionism than can be found in the society which was presided over by the Duke of Cumberland—or, indeed, in any other combination. It would, however, not have been surprising if intolerance had reached its culminating point in trade unions. The wonder is, not that there has been so much ill-feeling on the part of the men, but that there has been so little. Oppression breeds intolerance. The men knew that it was illegal to combine, and having therefore to conspire, they came to regard both their masters and the laws as their natural enemies, against whom they would have to wage a war prolonged, if not everlasting. "Consciousness," says Thornton, "of being singled out as victims by a partial and iniquitous law, directed exclusively against themselves, naturally excited in them both general prejudice against all law, and special rancor against those in whose behalf the specially obnoxious law had been enacted." Created by strikes and nurtured by oppression, unions long retained their warlike spirit, a characteristic which now happily is passing away.

It remains to add that combinations began, not amongst the workmen, but amongst the masters. The employed merely followed the example of their employers. It was, and still is, the practice of large capitalists to combine to keep down the price of labor, instead of competing with each other, and so raising wages to their "legitimate rate," as it is called. Until lately the combination of the masters has been directed to a great extent against poor, ignorant, and disunited men, and on that account the capitalists have generally been successful. This state of things is now changed.

It is seen, then, that trade unions were not improvised. They are not sudden and impulsive combinations, carelessly formed to be hastily abandoned. They are the natural outgrowth of natural laws. Workmen soon perceived that all the extra profits arising from approved appliances went into the pockets of the capitalists, and that a great deal of additional misery and suffering was imposed upon themselves. They saw that the hardest fare and the most work always accompanied each other, and there were complaints loud and deep. Indeed, trade unions have always been "forced" into existence by the oppression of the masters; and when attempts have been made by the men to establish a union in the absence of pressure from above, they have always failed.* At this distance of time we can now clearly see that the employers of Nottingham must be blamed for the fact that, in 1812, half the population of their town lived upon public relief. To destroy a loom was punishable with death,

* The first attempt of the London tailors and that of the puddlers in 1845 are cases in point.

and it was then that numerous associations of workmen sprung into existence. These associations developed into trade unions as soon as the law permitted them to do so. It can hardly be doubted that the indictment, fifty-seven yards long, charging some mechanics, in 1846, with conspiring to get up a strike, and with some "thousands" of misdemeanors, was the beginning of the now large association known as the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and if its success was at all doubtful, the conduct of the Messrs. Platt in 1852 established its basis on a rock. * It was the violation of 13 George IV., cap. 68, by the masters, in favor of themselves and against the interests of the men, which led the Spitalfield weavers to form their association. The oppression of the miners led to the formation of the union in 1831; while the clothworkers, the hatters, calico printers, the Scotch bakers (who in 1846 were little better than slaves), and all the new as well as the old societies, have been forced into existence by the injustice of the employers. "I am no lover of trade unions," says the Bishop of Manchester, "but they have been forced upon the working classes by the inequitable use of the power of capital."

* "After a lock-out of four months, and the expenditure of the whole of the accumulated funds of the Amalgamated Society, the employers opened their works again, and the men went back on the old terms. Had the Amalgamated Society broken up, as was confidently expected at the time, the labor movement might have been thrown back a quarter of a century . . . as it was, the defeat proved better than a victory. It was the turning-point in the history of the Amalgamated Society, which rapidly recovered its losses, and at the end of two years was stronger than ever." Mr. Thomas Hughes, in *The Century* for May, 1884.

CHAPTER II.

TRADE UNIONS—THEIR PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT.

Attempts to crush unionism—Hornby *v.* Close—Combination made legal—First conference of union delegates—The Sheffield outrages—The Royal Commission—Unequal laws—Picketing—The Trade Union Acts.

The events whose history has been sketched in the previous chapter show that combinations amongst workmen have existed from a remote period, as well as indicate the origin of trade unions. It was necessary thus to trace the historical continuity of the steps that led to the formation of unions, else their actual objects would not be clearly defined; the difficulties encountered and overcome not sufficiently appreciated; the basis on which unions rest not thoroughly understood, and the future of such institutions not readily realized.

"We watch the wheels of Nature's mazy plan,
And learn the future from the past of man."

When, however, the existence of unions became a fact, their succeeding career was by no means smooth. Every concession had to be wrung from the legislature by the severest struggles, and there was always a readiness shown to hamper or destroy them.

The power with which it was thought unionism could be crushed was very slowly withdrawn. It was not until 1824 that combinations of working men were rendered legal for "improving wages and reducing the hours of labor." and for these two purposes alone. The statute which gave this power, however, was anything but satisfactory. The word of the master was always to be taken in preference to that of the servant; the judges decided that all combinations which were "in restraint of trade" were criminal; and the Queen's Bench in 1867 confirmed the decision of the magistrates (*vide* Hornby *v.* Close), that societies having rules enabling them so to act, could hold no property, not even for benevolent and charitable purposes. This decision had reference to boiler-makers and iron ship-builders, and created a great sensation. More than one London newspaper declared a belief and expressed a hope that by it unionism had received its death blow. The trade unionists, too, were naturally alarmed; but they were not prepared to see destroyed an institution which had been builded up with so much trouble, and in the face of so many difficulties. A conference of trade union delegates was convened by the "Working Men's Association," and met in St. Martin's Hall, on March 5, 6, 7, 8, 1867, to consider the matter, as well as the Royal Commission to inquire into the trade unions that the Government of the day had just

appointed.* No such conference had ever been held before. There were present delegates from sixty-five London societies, twelve provincial trade councils, and twenty-five provincial trade societies. This conference was the forerunner of the trade unions congress that is now such a prominent annual public event. The delegates were unanimous in calling for an immediate alteration of the law, and so determined was their aspect that they refused to accept as a compromise the measure introduced into the House of Commons by Mr. Neale, M. P., for Oxford, having for its object a temporary protection to certain of the societies. On the other hand, a resolution was passed, a bill was drafted, and a petition adopted, which I here reproduce. Resolved—

"That, taking into consideration the late decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, in reference to trade unions, depriving them of all legal recognition, and of protection for their funds; further, taking into consideration the benevolent purposes for which the bulk of such funds are subscribed, this meeting of trade delegates is of opinion that it is the bounden duty of the legislature to enact such laws as will protect their funds, and thereby place the members of those societies on the same footing in respect to their funds as all other classes of her Majesty's subjects; and also bearing in mind the fact that the working of these trade unions are to be inquired into by a Royal Commission, and that legislation in respect to them may hereafter take place, we consider that a bill of the following nature will answer that purpose :—

BILL.

"Whereas combinations or associations of the operative classes for the protection of their trade interests are recognized by law; and whereas it appears that no adequate security is by law provided for the safety of the funds collected by such associations; be it therefore enacted, etc., etc.

"That the same protection shall be given to all members of such combinations or associations of the operative classes in respect to the funds collected for the purposes of the protection of their trade interests as are afforded to the members of Friendly Societies by the Friendly Societies Act; and shall be recoverable from defaulters in the same way and manner as is provided for in the said Friendly Societies' Act; and that their protection in respect to such funds shall be effectual whether such associations shall be connected with Friendly, Benefit, or Provident Societies, or otherwise, and shall extend to all such funds as are not to be devoted to the promotion of objects criminal in their own nature, but that nothing herein contained shall entitle the office-bearers of such associations or combinations to sue any of their members for arrear of contributions, nor in any respect to coerce any individual to become a member of such association; they shall give any further legal recognition (except as hereinbefore provided for) to such societies as is already given in Law. This Act to have effect until the end of the Parliamentary session next after the Royal Commission of Inquiry on Trade Unions has given in its report."

The petition was as follows :—

The Humble Petition of the Undersigned Members of the Society of , assembling or meeting at (or in) , in the Parish of , County :

HUMBLY SHEWETH,—

That your petitioners have seen with deep concern that by the late decision of the Court of Queen's Bench, in the case of Hornby *v.* Close, this organization of working men, in common with nearly two thousand similar Associations throughout the United Kingdom, are deprived of all legal recognition, and of protection for our funds.

That such funds having been contributed, not merely for what we consider the legitimate protection of our trade interests, but also, and principally, for mutual help and support in seasons of adversity; your Petitioners humbly submit that such a state of the law is an injustice to us as members of the community, will tend to foster fraud and to discourage provident habits; and is, therefore, extremely undesirable to establish or maintain.

Your Petitioners therefore humbly pray your Honorable House forthwith to enact such a law as will give to us, and the members of all such Societies, the same protection for their funds as are enjoyed by all other classes of her Majesty's subjects against fraud and dishonesty.

And your Petitioners will pray, etc.

There were many decisions given, too, by judges and minor magistrates that showed distinctly employers and operatives were not equal when standing before the seat of judgment. The law did not seem particularly just that would not allow men to "picket" in the tailor's strike, but which allowed the masters to address a circular to their fellow-employers (being members of the Master Tailors' Association), asking them not to employ certain unionist workmen named therein; nor does that decision (on the same dispute) seem a very wise one

*The object of the commission was "to inquire into the organization and rules of trade unions and other associations, whether of workmen or employers, and into the effect produced by such unions and associations on the workmen and employers respectively, and the relation between workmen and employers and on the trade and industry of the country."

which, acknowledging that the simple act of one man persuading another is perfectly legal, yet stated that, because several men organized themselves to inform workmen that such and such a shop was on strike, they were deemed guilty of an offence against the law. Nor could right-minded men be brought to see the justice of that law which, while it only fined the master for breach of contract, imprisoned the servant for the same offence. It was not until 1871 that an Act was passed remedying these defects. The law on the subject even then was, unfortunately, very ambiguous and imperfect. The unjust, cruel, and blundering imprisonment of the gas stokers showed that there was still plenty of scope for cunning lawyers when pleading to an excited jury and before a prejudiced judge. As a matter of fact the whole tendency of legislation for the men by the masters has ever been to keep wages low. Indeed, that has been the avowed object of the laws which have been passed. To counteract this, the unions were formed to keep them high, and we have the authority of a man who believed in a high moral standard that such conduct was praiseworthy. "If it were possible," wrote Mr. J. S. Mill, "for the working classes, by combining among themselves, to raise or keep up the general rate of wages, it need hardly be said that this would be a thing not to be punished, but to be welcomed and rejoiced at." The further improvements in the law in this respect will be noticed in due course.

At this time trade unions were regarded unfavorably by a large portion of the public, in consequence of what was known as the Sheffield outrages. "In order to compel men to join their unions and comply with the rules, a system had been adopted of taking away the tools and driving bands of independent or defaulting workmen, and this system had become so universal that when tools or bands had been stolen, the sufferers applied systematically to the secretary of the union to know on what terms the lost articles would be restored. But the unionists were not long content with this exercise of their power, and proceeded to the execution of a series of outrages and crimes which are perhaps almost without parallel in the history of communities supposed to be civilized. Masters and workmen who refused or failed to comply with their rules, were subjected to treatment of the most diabolical character. Their cattle were hamstrung, or otherwise mutilated, their ricks set on fire. They were shot at, and in one instance a master was killed by an air gun fired into a crowded room. Gunpowder was usually employed in the case of obnoxious workmen. Canisters were thrown down chimneys, bottles filled with the explosive, to which lighted fuses were attached, were thrown through windows of the workmen's dwelling-houses, thus exposing women and children to its terrible effects. It was a common practice to place gunpowder in grinding troughs, which exploded as soon as work was commenced." In justice to the great body of workmen at Sheffield, it should be stated that these outrages were committed by a very few persons, and were at all times execrated by the great body of the working classes. Out of sixty trade unions, then in existence, twelve were implicated in these outrages, and of these it was shown on inquiry that the greater proportion of the members knew nothing of the actions of their officers.

The result of the Sheffield outrages was, that a Royal Commission was appointed in 1867 to inquire in to the matter and into the condition of trade unions generally. The conference of delegates already alluded to urged upon the Government that a trade unionist representative should sit upon the commission. The request was refused, but ultimately a concession was made that Mr. Frederic Harrison, barrister-at-law, a well-known advocate of unionism and possessing the confidence of the unionists, should sit on the commission, and he rendered signal services in that position. The trade unionists also asked to be present at the inquiry to "watch" their interest. This also was refused, but the point was immaterial as the House of Lords amended the constitution of the commission by throwing its doors open to the press and the public. The disclosures before the commission are now a matter of history. The authors of the outrages were discovered only on their own confession, made under a promise of pardon, and thus they escaped punishment.

The good points of trade unions were also fully placed before the commission by the best of the unions' secretaries, whose evidence will well repay perusal at this day. Altogether the inquiry raised trade unions in the estimation of the public. It was seen that, purged of their impurities, they would be excellent institutions, and the legislature set to work to give them legal status. In 1871 the Trade Union Act was passed, making trade unions legal societies, and preventing the members from being liable to prosecution for conspiracy, an offence for which, in days gone by, so many had suffered imprisonment; while by an interpretation given to Russell Gurney's Act of 1868, due protection was given to the funds of the society. In short, trade unions were now acknowledged to be institutions of the country. They had henceforth a charter of liberty and under the light and freedom so given to them they began to flourish, and, as will be shown in the succeeding pages, have continued to flourish, to the welfare of the working classes, and the general benefit of the whole commonwealth.

CHAPTER III.

TRADES UNIONS—THEIR OBJECTS.

Equality of bargaining power—To raise wages—Protection—Sick benefits, etc.—Mutual support—Moral improvement of the workman—Executive of unions prevents strikes—Unselfishness of unionism—Trade unions congresses—Their influence—The International—The Paris conference.

The foregoing account of the origin of trade unions is almost an answer to the question, "What are the objects of trade unions?" The question must at all times be difficult to answer in a sentence, because the scope of the objects of unionism grows with the growth of unionism. At first they were merely a protection against contracts being *too* unjust, too heavy to be borne. They now demand—and rightly so—that contracts shall be fair. Mr. Dunning says the object of a trade union is "to ensure the freedom of exchange with regard to labor, by putting the workman on something like an equal position in bargaining with his employer." Professor Fawcett takes a similar view. Trade unions are formed, he says, so "that the laborer may have the same chance of selling his labor dearly as the master has of buying it cheaply." At a later date, the same authority declares the intention of the men to have been "to protect themselves against what are supposed to be the conflicting interests of their employers." So, too, Mr. Frederic Harrison believes that, at any rate, "the all-important question is how equality is to be established," and he represents the placing of labor on the same footing as capital as the great *desideratum*. Mr. W. T. Thornton, however, admits of no such object as the abstract idea of equality, The object of unionism, he maintains, is not merely to free men from the dictation of their employers, but to change positions, and to dictate; and that "their rule is to get as much as they can, and to keep as much as they can get."

Although the evidence given before the Trade Union Commission by some of the most intelligent and trustworthy of the trade union secretaries endorses such views as those expressed by Mr. Thornton, yet the history of the movement shows that although unions may have been founded principally, if not solely, as protective associations, and have developed to some extent into aggressive associations, yet they have long ago embraced other features in their objects. They now aim at every means that will raise workmen to the best position it is possible for them to obtain.

An impartial inquirer, then, will take a higher view of the object of trade unionism than Mr. Thornton believes in, without being liable to a charge of sentimentalism. The object of a trade union is a wide one, viz., to do all that can be done to better in every respect the condition of its members. The raising of the rate of wages is undoubtedly the principal means to that end, but to say that it is the "sole aim" is to mistake the one for the other. Based upon union, the efforts of these organizations are collective, and the results general, not special. Unlike most kinds of individual effort, the object is not to assist men to lift themselves out of their class, as if they were ashamed of it, or as if manual labor were a disgrace, but to raise the class itself in physical well-being and self-estimation.

No encyclopædia has yet devoted an article to trade unions, and yet trade unionism is an accomplished fact. They are built on a rock—a firm, sound, substantial basis. They cannot be annihilated. If they were done away with to-day, they would spring up again to-morrow, the same as in the celebrated dispute with Messrs. Platt, of Oldham, when the men were starved into submission, and were obliged to give up their union, yet they re-joined as soon as they were at work. Although unionism in Lancashire languished during the cotton famine, it sprang into life with renewed vigor when the crisis was over. It would be well if the employers at present endeavoring to crush out unionism amongst the workmen would take warning from these facts. It is a mistake to say that unions are the cause of hostility between labor and capital; they are the result of that hostility. It will be well for the employers to remember this. It will be well for them to realize the fact that unions will not decrease in power, as some persons fondly hope.

Wherever there has been intelligence, there has been combination. Professor Fawcett pointed out, in 1871, that there was no combination amongst the agricultural laborers, because they were "too ignorant," and because there was a "want of intelligence." They quietly submitted in North Herefordshire to a pittance of nine or ten shillings a week, while their fellow-laborers in Warwickshire were getting

twelve shillings a week, and probably they were so inured to suffering that they would never have complained, had they not been persistently subjected to pitiless, relentless, and objectless cruelty. It is a fact that the most intelligent of our artisans are the most earnest advocates of trade unions, and these have not been slow to instruct their less fortunate brethren in the advantages of unionism.

The power of trade unions will increase with experience, and their influence will extend as education becomes general. It is for employers to say whether they will bow to a necessity graciously, or, as hitherto, goad to the last extremity. Day by day the men are becoming less and less dependent upon the caprice of employers. Their demand for just laws cannot longer be disregarded, and even now they are able to show that they are as competent as any other class to take care of their own personal habits and requirements.

The unions, formed in the manner described, spread rapidly. They did not long confine themselves to the villages or towns in which they began, but the "unions" in various places "amalgamated," and thus influenced large areas. They extended their ramification still wider, and they embraced the whole kingdom, and even obtained a footing in America and Australia.

No trade union is subsidized. The funds arise from the contributions of members. In the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, the contribution generally is one shilling a week, and if a man be in arrears, he is suspended from the benefits of the society —unless, indeed, he is out of work, or in distressed circumstances.

No sketch of a trade union can give any idea of the scrupulous care that is taken to do that which is lawful and right. The code of rules of a trade union bristles with judicious safeguards. The ideas that a strike depends upon the *ipse dixit* of a paid agitator, and that if the men were to vote by ballot on the question, they would never consent to a strike, are conceived by those only who do not know what a trade union is. In most cases a strike is the result of action taken by the men themselves in each district, the executive having more power to prevent a strike than to initiate one. So recently as the last cotton strike, the executive did all they could to prevent the strike, but the operatives rushed into it in spite of the protestations of all the leaders.

As a proof of the care taken to avoid strikes, may be mentioned that several of the most powerful unions in the kingdom, have made a rule that in no case shall aid be given to any local branch, unless it can be proved that before going out a *bona fide* offer of arbitration has been made to the employer. The secretaries, or executive, too, always warn their union to avoid causes of dispute. "It was confidently expected," says Mr. Thos. Hughes, in the *Century*, "that strikes would grow in numbers and intensity, as the unions spread over larger areas;" but "of late years the number of these strikes has notably diminished; and every year the chances of such lamentable contests seem likely to decrease." It should be noted further, that Mr. Frederic Harrison, at the Trade Union Congress, and Mr. George Howell, in the *Contemporary Review*, pointed out that "in 1882, the Amalgamated Engineers, with an income of £124,000, and a cash balance of £168,000, expended in disputes altogether, including the support they gave to other trades, the sum of £895 only. That was far less than one per cent. of their income. The Ironfounders spent, out of an income of £42,000, £214 only; and the Amalgamated Carpenters, who had had a number of disputes, and had been engaged in strikes, spent £2000 only, out of £50,000, which was only four per cent.; the Tailors, with £18,000, spent £565 only; and the Stonemasons, with 11,000 members in union—the report seems to say more in sorrow than pride—spent nothing in strikes. During six years of unexampled bad trade, reduction of wages, and industrial disturbance, there were a great many strikes, and during that period, seven great trade societies expended in the settlement of disputes £162,000 only, out of a capital of nearly £2,000,000. Last year these societies, with an aggregate income of £330,000, and a cash balance of £360,000, expended altogether, in matters of dispute, about £5000, which was not two per cent. upon the whole of their income, and not one per cent. upon their total available resources for the year." The rules of unions, too, are so framed that the work of the officers of the local union is not interfered with by the duties of their office. Thus no member must call on an officer when he is at his ordinary work under a penalty of one shilling; and there are many wise and prudent regulations, the most important of which will be pointed out in due course.

A remarkable feature in trade unionism, is its thorough unselfishness. The various societies are not opposed to each other; indeed, they help one another. Every assistance is given to those who are prepared to sacrifice whatever benefits are to be derived from living in this country, by emigrating to another. Workingmen realize the fact that by *some* going, *all* are benefited. Not only do they cheerfully submit to the ordinary contributions of an entrance fee, and a weekly subscription, but they are ever ready to pay an extra levy, sometimes for their own trade purposes, but very often for ulterior objects, such as assisting Mr. Plimsoll in his agitation. The noble way

in which almost every union helped the agricultural laborers, and in which some of them subscribed to the relief fund for the famine in India, will not easily be forgotten. This sacrifice by the individual for the benefit of the community, contrasts favorably with the thoroughly selfish programme of the National Federation of Associated Employers, and probably accounts for the general tendency to victory on the side of the men whenever disputes arise. The employers do not try to help each other. They are in opposition to each other. Their motto is, "Each for himself," and they are only united in their attempts to crush the men. The men, on the other hand, it is worth repeating, sink all individual feelings, and help each other in a thoroughly practical and praiseworthy manner.

It remains to point out that the principle of unionism is extending beyond individual trades. In all large towns there are trade councils, formed of delegates from various unions. These councils look after the general interests of the unionists in the area represented, and an attentive reader of the public prints cannot have failed to notice that they are as ready to censure the action of union members who have done wrong as to support the action of those who are in the right. The growth of unionism shows itself still further in the annual congress which is now held. This is a thoroughly national institution, and its arrangements allow of the widest possible latitude in the subjects for discussion. It is now sixteen years since the "Labor Parliament" began (at Manchester) its annual sittings, and if there were no other evidence of the great good unionism accomplishes, the work of the Trade Union Congress would be ample testimony. Many most beneficent acts of Parliament are directly due to the action of the congress, and others have been, and others again are being, improved by the same influence. The Employers' Liability Bill is a case in point, and testifies also to the persistent industry and ability with which all obstacles are removed and all difficulties overcome. The extension of the Factory Acts to workshops is another instance, as is also the Act for the better Regulation of Mines; while the protection afforded to wages by alterations in the Bankrupt Law is also due to the direct influence of the parliamentary committee of the congress. At present it is exerting its powers to have a proper inspection of boilers, a proof of the competency of engine drivers; the protection of merchant seamen, and a great many other things. In addition, the congress, as has been said, exerts its influence on many questions that may not at first sight appear really "labor questions." While disavowing party politics, it urges that workmen should be enfranchised; that the Corrupt Practices Act should cheapen the cost of elections, so that labor may have a chance of direct representation in Parliament; that alterations in the criminal law shall not affect workmen differently to other people; and that artisans shall be jurymen, factory inspectors, and otherwise act on those occasions wherein the artisan and the operative are as much concerned as anybody else. Added to which it should be observed that the annual gathering together of the picked unionists of the country must tend to strengthen the feeling of brotherhood amongst them which is the basis on which unionism rests.*

It is easy to see witherward this tendency points. From a national congress to an international congress is a very short step. The Trade Union Congress of 1879 passed a resolution in favor of a federation of all the trades of the United Kingdom, and thorough unionists desire to see a federation of all the trades throughout the world. An international congress was successfully attempted some years ago, and failed at last only because of the socialism so characteristic of the continental *ouvrier*, who dreams of an exterminating war against a class, instead of seeking to do that which the International Society originally intended to do, viz., to make trade unionism cosmopolitan instead of national.

The experience of the late International Association will enable the promoters of a new one, inevitable sooner or later, to arrange matters upon as sound a basis as are trade unions in this country. The leading

*When the Trade Union Congress first started, it was made the medium of addresses in favor of the principles of unionism by gentlemen of position, not members of any union. It was soon seen that these addresses, however interesting, were not of that practical business character for which the congress met, and were delivered to a body of men who obviously required no proof of the principles they held, and the practice was at length forbidden by a standing order "that papers in defence of trade unions are unnecessary." Facilities, however, are always given for addresses on general subjects affecting labor, by competent authorities, at times which do not interfere with the business of the congress. Another and an important point that was found to require alteration was that in the early days of the congress the regulations for the admission of delegates were not sufficiently stringent, or, more correctly speaking, were not carried out with proper rigor. A peculiar circumstance brought the matter to a crisis. The paid agitators of a "Fair Trade" organization had offered their services as delegates gratuitously to certain unions, and these, actuated by a false economy, accepted those services. The agitators presented themselves for admission at the congress of 1881 (held in London), but after some discussion were expelled—the rule that delegates should be formally elected, and their expenses paid by the society which sent them, being on this occasion carried out, despite precedent; and the matter was finally set at rest by a resolution "that no one should be eligible as a delegate whose expenses are paid by private individuals, or by any institution not *bona fide* trade unions or trade councils."

trade unionists in England realize the fact, and are not afraid to express it. The germ of the organization is present in the foreign branches of some of the largest unions, and it is no uncommon thing for the workingmen here to assist their brethren in disputes abroad. To almost all the meetings of the Trade Union Congress come messages from their continental friends. In 1878 it was from the "International Labor Union," in 1879 it was from the Trade Unions of Germany. In 1881 the workmen of Switzerland similarly approached their English friends; and in 1883 came an invitation from Paris that was cordially accepted. The friendly feeling towards each other of workmen in different countries, and the international relationships that are springing up, were illustrated in 1874 and in 1882 by the visit to England of deputations from the railway servants of France and Belgium; and still more recently by the reciprocal visits of the London and Paris cabmen.

This noble sentiment is peculiar to workmen. The employers have not yet learned to love one another. It is a sentiment, however, that is rapidly spreading, and in high quarters. Professor Thorold Rogers, in his admirable work so often quoted, says, "I confess that I look forward to the international union of labor partnerships as the best prospect the world has of coercing those hateful instincts of government, all alike irresponsible and indifferent, by which nations are perpetually armed against each other, to the infinite detriment, loss, and demoralization of all."

In response to the invitation of 1883, just referred to, the Trade Unions Congress empowered Mr. E. W. Bailey, Mr. John Burnett, and Mr. Henry Broadhurst and others to attend the conference in Paris of representative working men of France, Italy, and Spain, and I will allow these gentlemen to express their views on the matter in their own words, by giving a condensation of their official report. "The conference was presided over by Messrs. Broadhurst and Shipton, and by Miss Simcox, and by the French, Italian, and Spanish delegates successively. Mr. Burnett presided over the first public meeting, and Mrs. Heatherley over the third. The French procedure in business is different from our own. They discuss a question generally. They attempt to form a resolution to meet the expression of opinion given in debate. So far as our experience went, this mode is not so expeditious as the custom adopted by us, of drawing up a resolution and debating it, and then amending it as may be found necessary. We found that the chief work lay in the debate in committee over the terms of resolutions. At one time it looked as though the conference would fail in this work; however, this undesirable event was avoided, and our subsequent business became more agreeable and easy. The point of difference was the extent to which the State should be asked to protect labor.

"Our time was too much occupied with meetings to admit of much investigation into the number, the extent, and strength of the Paris trade unions; but so far as we could gather, it appeared that the compositors, the engineers, the smiths, and the carpenters possessed the best unions. Even these cannot be compared with the British unions in stability or discipline. The difficulty appears to be to get them to pay contributions of more than twopence a week. Even this sum is only paid by a comparatively small number of the men. The masons' delegate stated that out of some thousands of masons who accepted the principles of their society, only about sixty men were regular subscribers. From this statement, and from other things which came under our observation, it would appear that the numerical strength of an association is reckoned upon the basis of the number of those in the given trade who approve of the objects of the union, and not upon the number of those who contribute to the funds, such as they are. It was upon this loose condition of things that the English delegates made their strongest attack, by stating the condition of membership in Great Britain, and appealed to the members to exert themselves in making the societies more solid and numerous.

"From what came under our notice, we are of opinion that the condition of the workpeople (*i. e.*, the mechanics) in Paris is not so good as that of corresponding trades in Great Britain. We met an English mason in Paris, who is engaged, by an English firm of contractors, at the erection of a Protestant church. He informed us that he was receiving London wages (viz., ninepence an hour), out of which he paid eighteen francs a week (15*s.*) for a furnished room, firing, and the use of a kitchen, the latter shared amongst three families. A shoemaker, who was a delegate at the conference, said that men in his trade were working fourteen hours a day for three and a half francs (2*s.* 11*d.*). These and similar statements made by other delegates, in reference to some of the provinces of France, would seem to prove that the condition of other French workpeople in the large centres and at large works is anything but an enviable one.

"With the exception of a wish to rely upon the State for things they may do for themselves, we did not object to the general views of the French delegates on social questions. A delegate from the carpenters (M. Tortellier) was an exception. He was in favor of revolution by force, but

we were informed that this person was under a sentence of imprisonment, and would serve his term of punishment at his convenience. The natural inference to be drawn from this statement was that he was, in the interest of the reactionary party, doing his best to cause strife; thus affording a pretext for the continuance of the French law relating to labor combinations, which we have no hesitation in saying is a disgrace to, and an anomaly in, a Republican nation.

"The speeches of the French delegates contained constant reference to, and condemnation of, the *bourgeois*, *i.e.*, the middle classes. It would appear that there is little or no intercourse between the workmen and the middle classes in France, and the former, therefore, look upon the latter as their natural enemies; but we are bound to say that the want of intimacy is not only obvious in the cases referred to, but it is also true, to a lamentable extent, between the various groups of workmen themselves. We are painfully alive to the differences between workmen in our own country, and to its deterrent effect upon our thought and progress, but, happily, it does not exist here to such a degree as it does in France.

"We have here given a *resume* of our delegation. We do not now offer any definite opinions as to the ultimate issue of the conference in relation to the future intercourse between the peoples of the United Kingdom and the peoples of the continental nations. We hope it may bear some fruit. We are assured of one thing, and that is that the British trade unions have not suffered by the contact with their foreign associates. We should be open to the charge of vanity if we ventured to hope that our continental brethren had benefited by our intercourse with them."

In Antwerp, Ghent, and Brussels, too, the cabinet-makers have recently been holding meetings, and have decided to form a union on the plan of the Alliance Cabinet-makers' Association of England ; and indeed, any one who reads the official documents of the trade unions of the United Kingdom cannot but be struck with the close intercourse with the workmen of other nations, with a view that no person taking work in a foreign country shall undersell the workmen of that country.

It is seen, then, that a trade union is pre-eminently fitted for the work it has to do, as must necessarily be the case when the work to be done has created the organization, and not that the organization has created the work to be done. The power to take men whence they are not wanted, and to carry them—abroad if necessary—where there is work to do ; the care that is taken of the interests of the men, as opposed to the aggression of the employer, as shown by the frequent reports of the branch secretaries on the trade of their districts; the ability to support men "on strike;" the way in which the unions assist each other and the ease with which additional contributions are successfully levied; and the fund that is reserved for sickness, emigration, accidents, superannuation, burials, etc.—of which more hereafter—are all evidences of the willingness of the men to obey an organization in which they have confidence, and which they believe is working for their good.

CHAPTER IV.

TRADE UNIONS—THEIR EFFICACY.

They have raised wages—Proofs and instances—How much have the unions raised wages?—The unions a record of the state of the labor market—Wages would not rise quickly but for unions—"An unsuccessful strike often succeeds"—Local strikes affect distant areas and many trades—The agricultural laborers—Where unionism is weak, wages are low—Shorter hours, yet more work—Piece work—Errors of unions—Difficulties of the union secretary—Foolish strikes injurious, may prevent a rise of wages—A fair day's wages—Employers combinations—Boards of arbitration—Trade unions prevent strikes—Spread of unionism—The power of trade unions acknowledged by the employers—Trade unions as friendly and benefit societies—Women's trade unions—Other features of trade unions, some obsolete.

Although, as has been shown in the preceding chapter, the very nature of a well-organized trade union shows its fitness for the work it has to do, yet it will be satisfactory if it can be shown that they do their work well. The question then arises—Have they been successful? Do they carry out the objects for which they are formed?

Let us ask, in the first place, "Have they succeeded in raising wages in the past?"

It seems so natural that combination should raise wages, that one is amazed such a position can be questioned. As things at present are, the relations between employers and employed imply a pecuniary bargain Can it be doubted that when workmen combine they are much more likely to adjust the bargain on more favorable terms to themselves than if they had no power of organized action? Those even who are unwilling to admit the efficacy of trade unions cannot help showing at times—unconsciously, perhaps—that they have an opposite conviction; and some time ago one who is least friendly to trade organizations pointed out that the secret of the attachment of the Southern States of America to slave labor "lay chiefly in the obtaining of labor at will at a rate which cannot be controlled by any combination."

Now, in looking over the history of trade unions, no impartial observer can doubt for one moment that the employers have been gradually giving way. In 1845, Mr. W. Thornton had already called attention to the fact that the result of trade unions had been to raise wages. In the baking trade in Edinburgh and Glasgow, and other Scotch towns, before 1846, the men were little better than vassals. They lived with their employers, in cheerless celibacy; they were locked in their rooms at nine o'clock at nights; and, in short, being driven by oppression into union, they raised wages 20 per cent., improved their condition, and are now a sober and steady class of men. In 1873 the General Alliance of Operative House Painters asked for higher wages, and the answer was an increase in the rate of pay amounting to £8000 a year. The annual report for 1873 of the Amalgamated Society of Tailors shows an increase of wages amounting to £40,000 per annum, while the sum spent in strikes and lockouts amounted to only £549 12*s.* 9*d.* A great deal of the increase is directly traceable to strikes or threats of strikes; though, of course, part may be due to the general prosperity of the country. Still, it is very doubtful whether the men would have shared in that prosperity had it not been for the existence of the union.

Hardly a single report is issued by the trade unions that does not call attention to the rise in wages which by combined action has been brought about. Throughout the length and breadth of the land the trade unions have, during the past thirty or forty years, forced wages up, and when wages have fallen, the fall has not been to the low point they were at before the rise began. It would therefore be tedious to fill page after page with a mass of evidence to prove what is universally acknowledged. Wages have risen. That is the great fact. The principal if not the only point upon which discussion arises is as to whether or not the trade unions have assisted to bring about that state of affairs. One thing is certain, the employers are not authorities on the question. They are too crotchety. One of their great arguments against trade unions is that they fail in their object, that they do not succeed in raising wages; while with their next breath they excuse themselves to the public for the high price of coal, by saying "it is the unions raise the price of labor." Perhaps it would be as well if they remembered the experience of the past, when out of eighty strikes for advance of wages forty-three were successful, seven doubtful, and only thirty unsuccessful.

How much of the rise in wages is due to the direct action of trade unions, how much to their indirect action, and how much to general progress and prosperity, are questions that it is difficult, if not impossible, to answer. A table, however, by Mr. Giffen, whom Mr. John Morley describes as "singularly cool and competent," throws a little light upon the subject. It is as follows:—

"Assuming the aggregate income of the people as about 1200 millions now, and that the wages of workingmen are per head twice what they were, the aggregates in 1843 and at the present time would compare as follows:—

	Income in 1843 Millions.	Income now. Millions.	Increase. Millions.	Increase per cent.
	£	£	£	
Capitalist classes from capital	190	400	210	110
Working income in Income-tax returns	90	180	90	100
Ditto not in Income-tax returns	235	620	335	160
Total	515	1200	635	130

Thus the increase of what is known as working-class income in the aggregate was greater than that of any other class, being 160 per cent., while the return to capital and the return to what are called the capitalist classes, whether it is from capital proper, or, as Mr. Giffen maintains, a return more in the nature of wages, had only increased about 100 per cent." Can any one for a moment doubt that the "extra" 60 per cent. that fell to the lot of working men is due entirely and solely to action of trade unions? Does not all experience show that the capitalist class have ever taken as much as they could? Had it not been for a resisting influence, and the only resisting influence is the trade union, the figures would have been reversed. The capitalists would have gained an increase of 160 per cent., the operatives of 100. Perhaps the discrepancy would have been much greater. For my own part, I believe that trade unions are to be credited with more than 60 per cent. increase, because it would be easy to show that Mr. Giffen has underrated the general increase;* and, as I have already argued, but for the action of the unions there would have been very little advance of wages indeed, nearly all of the increase falling to the capitalist. At any rate, 60 per cent. of the 160 per cent. increase must be attributed, and attributed as a minimum, to the direct action of the trade unions.

Although the question, "To what extent is a rise in wages due to the action of a trade union?" may be difficult to answer, there can be little doubt that some portion of any particular advance is often due to that influence. Where are the employers who ever came forward and advanced wages unasked?† They are few and far between, and what chance of improving his condition would any laborer have who struck singly? Very little chance indeed. Now labor, unlike a commodity, will not keep. Once gone, it is gone forever. A day idly spent is a day lost; and as the capitalist can wait for labor longer than the laborer can wait for wages, there is a natural tendency to depress wages. Then why do they not fall? Is it not because of the counteracting power of the union? When bricklayers from Liverpool went to work on the new town hall at St. Helen's, they found men in the same trade as themselves getting higher wages than they were. They instantly demanded to be placed on the same footing as their more fortunate brethren. The employers refused to accede to the request, for reasons best known to themselves. A strike ensued, and after a short delay the men accomplished their object. Now, is there one sane man within the four seas of Great Britain who will deny that in this case the Liverpool bricklayers obtained their advance by united action?

This instance shows something more. It shows how, with a widely spread union, the rates of wages in various towns may be known—as in large unions they are—and the highest rate demanded. Had the St. Helen's bricklayers belonged to the same union as those from Liverpool, the difference in the rate of wages in two towns so near each other would have been known and equalized, or, in other words, the lower rate would have been raised. But how can men all over the country ascertain what their labor is worth in various parts of the country unless they act upon the principle of association, and agree upon an organization that encourages an interchange of information between different parts of the country? When, too, the highest rate of wages is discovered, what would be the good of the discovery unless there was a union strong enough to enforce the demands it is desired to make? If not the only way, at any rate the easiest

* "If we had commenced about twenty to twenty-five years ago, we should have been able to show a very great improvement since that time; while at that date also, as compared with an earlier period, a greater improvement would have been apparent.—Mr. Giffen, in the pamphlet already quoted.

† In the Newcastle engineering strike, the employers admitted that the condition of trade from the beginning permitted an advance of wages; yet no advance was proposed, till the pressure of the trade unions was brought to bear.

method of ascertaining the "real value" of labor is by putting pressure on the capitalist. Nearly all the present wages rates are based on no real principle of value. Any of the rates are very much below the real value of the work done,* and represent the amount which the workman has been able to squeeze out of his employer, not the full amount to which he is entitled, such amount being all above interest on capital, a charge for deterioration of plant, cost of supervision and cost of conduct of business. In bringing pressure to bear upon the capitalist, the union is only doing what merchants and manufacturers do to find out the price of the commodities in which they deal. For two years the attention of the colliery proprietors was chiefly engrossed with "putting on the screw" in greater or less twists at a time, until they found a limit to the disgorging powers of the consumer, and that limit was far beyond the wildest demands ever made by any class of men who have ever struck for an advance of wages. †

But, say those opposed to trade unions, wages would ultimately rise when profits rose, without any combination on the part of the workmen. With a desire to concede as much as possible to our opponents, let us grant this by no means self-evident proposition. There is still the fact that the influence of the union obtains the advance sooner than would otherwise be the case, and that is a gain to the men, and another proof that the societies are able to bring about the results which it is their object to effect. If there were no combination amongst the men, and if profits were rising, the employers would pocket the enhanced profits, until an imperious necessity obliged them to yield some portion to the starving dependents upon their generosity and benevolence.

Not, only, then, is a union able to bring about a rise in wages sooner than would otherwise be the case, but it is also able to wrest from the employers a larger share of the profits than they would concede to a request unsupported by the power to enforce it.

"Still more," says Mr. J. S. Mill, "might poor laborers who have to do with rich employers remain long without the amount of wages which the demand for their labor would justify, unless, in vernacular phrase, they stood out of it; and how can they stand out for terms without organized concert? What chance would any laborer have who struck singly for an advance of wages? How could he ever know whether the state of the market admitted of a rise, except by consultation with his fellows naturally leading to concerted action?" The only instance that has come under the notice of the author of employers being eager to aid a trade union was recently, when, for their own advantage, they wished to see the resuscitation of the Macclesfield silk weavers' union, as a protection to themselves from each other by equalizing wages.

Even if a strike fail, it not only shows that the men have capacity, willingness, and power to combine in such a way that masters will often hesitate ere they resume the encounter; but, paradoxical as it may appear, an unsuccessful strike often succeeds. Suppose there has been a long and terrible dispute, like the one in the agricultural districts, and that those engaged in it have been obliged to return to work without the advance which was at first sought. Can it be doubted that in the case referred to, the praiseworthy pertinacity of the agricultural laborers created such an impression that the farmers will think twice before locking them out when next an advance is asked, especially as all right-feeling and right-thinking men acknowledge that the circumstances of the world are inconsistent with the maintenance of the English agricultural laborer in the condition which has hitherto been his? Or take the case of the London builders, when 10,000 of them gave up £325,000 without at first getting anything for their money, but after they had returned to work "had their wages raised by successive steps from an average of 25s. to one of 30s., and that without being obliged to resort to a general strike, or to any strike on a large scale." All their recent strikes have been what are termed sectional, and in many instances they have not had to strike, but have got what they wanted by simply making it clear that they were prepared to strike unless they got it. Chiefly by this means it is that they have succeeded in getting 5s. a week, or 20 per cent., added to their wages. Now, 5s. a week is £13 a year, which, multiplied by 10,000, comes to £130,000, or 40 per cent. on the original outlay, which now yielding such interest, must be admitted to have been really, in spite of first appearances, a very tolerable investment.

Indeed, almost the whole of the great failures on the part of the men, when looked at in the same way, show that all was not lost—nor, indeed, so much as was supposed. "The same dismal uniformity, the same miserable monotony of defeat," as an ironmaster once called a long series of strikes, would indeed be gloomy if it

* The wages of the agricultural laborer is an example of this.

† In Manchester the carpenters are paid a halfpenny per hour more than in Liverpool. The reason is stated to be that "in Manchester both employers and employed are thoroughly organized, and an amicable relationship exists between them; in Liverpool they are comparatively disorganized."

could not be shown that, as in the great Montrose's campaign, Argyll often gained the victory, but failed to reap its fruits. The great strike of the Manchester spinners in 1859, when £250,000 of wages were forfeited apparently to no purpose; a similar loss when in the following year 30,000 spinners at Ashton and Staleybridge struck work; the dispute on the Tyne and the Wear in 1832, when thousands of pitmen held out with heroic endurance; the strike of the Manchester builders in 1833, when £70,000 of wages were sacrificed; the Preston strikes in 1836 and 1854, in the former of which thirteen weeks' idleness cost the men £57,200—and in the latter there was the terrible suffering of seventeen thousand persons foregoing £420,000 of wages for thirty-six weeks; the engineers' strike in 1853, which lasted fifteen weeks, and in which £43,000 of wages were lost; the strike in the London building trade in 1860; that of the ironworkers in Staffordshire, and that in the North in 1865; that of the London tailors in 1867; and that of the South Wales miners in 1873, who sacrificed £750,000; to say nothing of the disputes in the eastern counties, and the numerous disputes and lock-outs which have recently dotted the island; here surely (and these are but samples) is a list of failures sufficient to stamp out the life of unionism, because in the cases mentioned the men had to give in and return to work on terms sometimes the same, often worse, and seldom better, than those against which they struck. Strikes, however, are sometimes of that nature of which it can be said, "It is the battle only, and not the victory, that can be dwelt upon with advantage." The men often appear to have failed disastrously. But the fact is, they were not failures entirely. They were defeats in which the victors got all the glory, the defeated all the profit. The employers rush to the fight with the dash of cavalry, and force the men to capitulate; but between their victories they are constantly giving way to the men. The workmen seem fully conscious of this; and in a printers' dispute in Liverpool, a few years ago, men turned out with their fellows when the result of the former's doing so was to strike for lower wages. Such was their faith in the ultimate advantages of unionism, and events showed that they had not miscalculated. As Mr. Thornton puts it, "During nearly half a century all signal triumphs have been on one side, all substantial success on the other."

It is not, therefore, just to say that a strike having cost £700,000 or £800,000, and having failed to obtain that for which it strove, is necessarily a failure. The advance may come later on. Nor can it be said that a strike that has cost £20,000, and raised wages say only £2,000, has failed. The strike will certainly have been local; the rise is almost certain to be general. A strike, too, in one portion of the country often enables men to obtain an advance of wages in another portion without recourse to the final appeal. The funds of the union are thus saved, and often a large advance is obtained at a very small cost, as in the case of the tailors in 1873, who, as already mentioned, obtained an advance amounting to £40,000 per annum, at a cost of only £594 12*s* 9*d*.

What, then, sometimes appears an ineffectual strike often proves to be one of great effect. It must be remembered, too, that non-unionists often reap to some extent the advantages of the unionists. Indeed, in most instances they enjoy all the benefits of an advance brought about by the action of the union, and it is for them to settle with their own consciences the honesty of reaping advantages, to obtain which they have contributed nothing. When they do not obtain the whole of the advantages of a rise, they are pretty sure to obtain some advance, as when the "standard" of wages has been raised it drags after it a general increase all round. It appears from this that union workmen are perfectly justified in refusing to work with non-union men, though the practice of doing so is far from general. The latter have done nothing to raise or sustain wages, and ought not to expect to enjoy the results of the sacrifices, the moral courage, and the contributions of the unionists. Whenever union workmen do work with non-union men it shows that unselfishness and generosity—that sinking of self for others—which are characteristic of almost all unions. It is worth mentioning, too, that other trades besides the one "on strike" are often benefited by an advance in the wages of those "on strike." Thus, if the "puddlers" receive an advance of wages, the hammermen, the rollers, and the laborers are pretty certain to be similarly treated. It is thus seen that the material advantages of a strike cannot be reckoned by taking the cost of the strike and the gain in wages, and substracting one from the other.

It may be said—and very justly—that, if the general tendency of trade unionism be to raise wages, then, where there are no unions, wages should be lower than ordinary. This is exactly the case. Unfortunately, the non-unionists keep no statistics, and it is impossible to ascertain the exact wages they are paid. It is, however, generally known that the worst paid trades in the kingdom are those which have no unions. The evidence of the men themselves is valuable on this point, because, unless they felt they received an advantage, they would leave the union. What the men want is high wages for little work,

as much wages as they can get for as little work as they can do, and if their unions could not give those benefits to them, they would cease to support them. "I have been a worker," says one operative, "something like forty-four years. For twenty years of that period I have been employed in erecting machinery in different parts of the country, and I have no hesitation in saying, wherever we find union principles ignored a low rate of wages prevails, and the reverse where organization is perfect. The most approved remedy for low wages is combination."

An advance of wages, however, is not the only object of a trade union, nor the sole purpose of a strike. Sometimes the men demand shorter hours. To work a less number of hours for the same amount of wages is naturally attractive to the workman. He not only sees that such an arrangement gives him more time for recreation and for the enjoyment of home comforts—for billiards, books or beer—without calling on his wife to "pinch, cut, and contrive," but that the reduction of hours causes more of his fellow-workmen to be employed. The demand for a commodity being the same, and the number of working hours diminished, more men must be employed to produce the same amount of work in less time. Men who were forced to be idle are thus provided with employment. These additional workmen become spenders as well as producers, and the advantages of that he knows to consist in a general improvement all round. In thus benefiting himself, therefore, he is benefiting his class. No action of the trade unionists has been crowned with such signal success as that taken to bring about the reduction of hours. The State itself watched the straining efforts that were being made, both recently and in years gone by; and when there was a sign of tottering or failure, came to its assistance. "The demand is against the laws of political economy," cry the employers. "We ask a blessing," reply the men, "but are not strong enough to force it." So Parliament steps in and gives a Factory Act; just as when the men (not the employers) complained that their union was not strong enough to better the condition of miners when underground, the House of Commons passed a "Mines Regulation Act." The support which the demands of the unions are receiving from Parliament is a very significant phenomenon in the History of England.

What is very surprising is that the employers believe that they can get more work out of a man when they work him to death. They forget that it is not the miles one travels, but the pace that kills. They ignore the doctrine of Adam Smith, that "the man who works so moderately as to be able to work constantly, not only preserves his health the longest, but in the course of a year executes the greatest quantity of work." Capitalists do not pursue such a policy in regard to their horses. The fact is, they are not thinking of their men. They are brooding over their valuable machinery standing idle, and calculating what it would bring them if it went on working a few hours longer. The manufacturer sitting in his counting-house, within the sound of the murmur of his machinery and the chinking of his engine, hums to himself at each clack of the fly-wheel, "So much for me, so much for me." And when he beholds his "hands" leaving for home on a summer evening while it is yet light, and no longer hears the heavy beat of the beam or the rattle of the shuttle, he looks upon the stillness as the symbol of his loss. Such men must be very miserable on Sundays.

It is now, however, a well ascertained fact that, within certain limits, more work is done as a rule where there is a prospect of an early cessation from work than when men know that they are doomed to several hours of continuous employment. A few years ago the average day's work in England was ten hours. On the Continent it was twelve, in Russia sixteen or seventeen; and yet it is calculated that two English mowers would do in a day the work of six Russian ones. Russian factory operatives worked seventy-five hours in the week, when those in England worked only sixty, yet the work of the former was only one-fifth of that of the latter. When the average working time of a miner in South Wales was twelve hours a day, those in the North of England worked only seven, yet the cost of getting coals in Aberdare was 25 per cent. more than in Northumberland. As has been well said, "The workman who cannot tire himself in eight hours is not worth his salt."

In showing the efficacy of trade unions, and in maintaining the justice of their demands, it must not be thought that the author imagines they never err. No one will pretend to deny that the unions have done what many people do not approve, and which they themselves on calmer reflection, do not approve. But this, as Mr. Bright says, only shows they are not immaculate, and that their wisdom, like that of other classes, is not perfect. One is tired of hearing that the result of trade unions was Broadhead, Crookes, and Hallam; that its means were ruffianism and murder; its ends never inquired into. These men were not the result of unionism, but of the attempt to crush unionism.* The laws of

* Broadhead himself said to the Royal Commissioners: "If the law would only give the unions some power to recover contributions, without having recourse to such measures, there would be no more heard of them."

the country made all unionists conspirators. Even the simplest actions, which are now allowable, were illegal, and when what is morally right is decided by tribunals to be legally wrong, the culprit has more respect for himself than he has for the law. Unionism, however, needs no defence here on that head. The press may croak about the three miscreants above named until it is hoarse; it can have little effect upon an institution which has produced such men as Thomas Burt, Henry Broadhurst, William Allan, John Burnett, Joseph Arch, and John Kane.

At the same time the unions, and especially the union secretaries, have a very difficult task to perform. The average British workman is not yet sufficiently advanced in intelligence to apprehend that wages may vary in two ways. His union, it is imagined, has power to force wages up; he is loath to admit that it cannot sometimes resist their falling. The author once saw an iron worker who had been dismissed from his work because he had been drinking for three days; and the stupid fellow was very wroth indeed because the union secretary would not order a strike on account of the man's dismissal. "I pay my money to t' union," said he, "for protection, and this is how you serve me." The executive of a union, then, has to be careful, not only that it does not strike unless it has right on its side, but it has to educate the men to the same opinion. The workmen have to be taught that they must not attempt to obtain from capital impossible concessions. They must only strike when cessation of production means loss of profit to the masters. For instance, it would not only be manifestly unjust but absurd to strike for higher wages in the face of a falling market. How difficult it is to impress this upon the men, the union secretary knows full well. Sometimes the men cannot see the force of the forbearance which is urged upon them, and in their ignorance are very self-willed.

It is gratifying to find that greater care than formerly is taken to prevent those strikes which, being foolish, were always disastrous. How easily this may be done is evident from the practice in some trades of keeping complete registers in which the fluctuations of the market are indicated, and the union secretaries are as well acquainted with the price of cotton and iron as the masters. Even this, however, is not always sufficient, and the employers show, with arguments seemingly plausible, that their profits are very small. The men, however, though unable to point out the fallacy in the reasoning opposed to them, nevertheless are aware of its existence. "We have been working at a loss for years," said a large cotton manufacturer to the union secretary. "Yes," was the shrewd reply, "you have been losing your little mills and building bigger ones." The cotton spinners of Bolton, in September, 1874, sent a similar reply to the notice of a reduction of wages given by the masters. "The operatives," said the reply, "cannot judge of trade from your standpoint. They draw conclusions from circumstantial evidence, and contend that the princely fortunes that seem to be amassed around us cannot have arisen from an unremunerative business; therefore you must pardon them if it be difficult to make them believe that a reduction in wages is called for."

It is certainly a fair question for discussion whether or not the rate of wages at the present day is as high as it ought to be, even in the best paid trades. Capital is increasing far faster than population. When the latter had doubled itself the former had quadrupled itself. It seems, therefore, merely obedience to a natural law that wages should rise; and if trade unions have failed in their efforts at all, it is in the fact that while they have raised wages, they have not raised them enough.

War is essentially such an uncongenial state of affairs that no surprise can be felt that the combinations of employers and of men endeavor to discover some means of amicably settling disputes. It would naturally suggest itself to minds on both sides that a meeting of ambassadors or delegates from the men should meet similar officers from the employers to talk over matters. That this should come about was prophesied so long ago as 1846 by Mr. John Bright, who, in opposing the Factory Bill, said that "the working classes would every day become more and more powerful and intelligent—not by violent combination or collisions with their employers, but by a rational union amongst themselves, by reasoning with their employers, and by the co-operation of all classes." It is worth noting that the initiatory step in this direction was taken by the trades unions. The late general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, over and over again, during many years, advocated what is known now as "arbitration," and he was ably backed in his efforts by Mr. R. Applegarth, former secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters, and other well-known trade unionists. In 1860 a board of arbitration was formed, *at the request of the men*, amongst the Nottingham lace-workers, and since then the trades of Staffordshire, Middlesborough, Cleveland, Bradford, Sheffield, and other places have followed that example.

It would be out of place here to point out upon what basis arbitration should be formed. Mr. Rupert Kettle, in his pamphlet, has provided us with the necessary forms of proceeding. It is sufficient to state that such a mode of settling a dis-

pute should always to be encouraged. It is very much cheaper to both sides than a strike or lock-out; and it does not leave behind it that "immortal hate and study of revenge" which are the result—in the present state of human nature—of a long and rancorous struggle. The argument that arbitration is useless because it is not binding in law, is neither true in fact nor just in reason. The contract which Mr. Kettle directs to be signed when he acts as arbitrator, is as binding as any other contract, but if it were not, honor has such force in our public code of morality that both masters and men would feel bound to obey a compact solemnly and freely entered into. It is urged by some that arbitrations are unjust in principle, because they are founded upon a fallacy, viz., that they can fix the future market price of labor, irrespective of the laws of supply and demand. This, however, is not so. To fix the price of labor for a certain time—for so many weeks or so many days—in advance is not deciding upon a future price. It is merely selling a larger quantity of labor at to-day's price, or, as Mr. Kettle puts it, of "to-day's labor." It is generally better in all commodities—better for both buyer and seller—to deal wholesale. The masters will buy no more of labor at a higher price than they can help; the men will sell as little at a low price as they possibly can. To say that such a contract as the one here supposed decides the future price of labor is no more true than that a man agreeing to supply another man with apples at twopence a pound for six months is deciding upon a future price for apples. The price is to-day's price, the other article in the agreement relates merely to the times of delivery. Perhaps in arbitrations may be seen what will one day become an impartial tribunal for determining what is a "fair day's wages for a fair day's work," and it is one of the best, as it is one of the most gratifying proofs of the efficacy of trade unions, that they have been successful in the formation of boards of arbitration, and in teaching their men to submit to the decisions of the arbitrators.

In order, however, that trade unions may lay claim to fitness for carrying out their objects, they must show something more than that they are able to conduct a strike to a successful issue, to palliate the evils of an unsuccessful strike, and to succeed in occasionally forming a board of arbitration. They must show that in their very nature they have the desire and the power to prevent strikes. It is gratifying to be able to state that in this respect, also, the trade unions are eminently successful. Indeed economy, if nothing else, would dictate such a policy. The executories of trade unions have been taught by experience that, even when an object is worth striving for, a strike is often the worst, and always the most expensive way of obtaining it. Strikes, as a rule, are a *dernier ressort*, and are more frequently discountenanced by the general secretary than approved of by him. Indeed, it is the boast of most trade union secretaries that they have prevented more strikes than they have originated. This is all the more creditable, because some branch or other is always urging a strike. "At least twenty times in as many months," wrote Mr. Allan, "we have recommended that a strike should not take place." "About one-third," answered Mr. Applegarth, when questioned on the subject by the Royal Commissioners, "of the applications made to us to strike during the last few years have been refused; and Mr. Macdonald, secretary of the House Painters' Alliance, said—"Our parent society never originated a strike, but it has stopped many."

The accounts of the various trade unions, also, shows how reluctant the executories are to indulge in the luxury of a strike. This was recently pointed out by Mr. George Howell, in his clever and concise article in the *Contemporary Review* of September, 1883, and by Mr. Frederic Harrison in his address at the Trade Union Congress at Nottingham in the following month, published in the same magazine in November last. Attention has been already called to this subject, but the passage will bear repetition. "Last year," says Mr. Frederic Harrison, "the Amalgamated Engineers, with an income of £124,000 and a cash balance of £168,000, expended in disputes altogether, including the support they gave to other trades, £895 only. That was far less than one per cent. of the whole of their income. The iron-founders spent, out of an income of £42,000, £214 only; and the Amalgamated Carpenters, who had a number of disputes and been engaged in strikes, spent £2,000 out of £50,000, which was only four per cent. The tailors, with £18,000, spent £565 only; and the stonemasons with 11,000 members in union, spent nothing in strikes. During six years of unexampled bad trade, and reduction of wages, and industrial disturbance, there were a great many strikes, and during that period seven great trade societies expended in the settlement of disputes £162,000 only out of a capital of nearly £2,000,000. Last year (1882) these societies, with an aggregate income of £330,000 and a cash balance of £360,000, expended altogether in matters of dispute about £5,000, which was not two per cent. on the whole of their income, and not one per cent. on their total available resources for the year." When it is remembered that 99 per cent. of these

societies' expenditures were for benevolent and provident purposes and one per cent. only for strikes, it is absurd to say that the chief object of a trade union is to foster trade disputes.

The power on part of trade unions to prevent strikes increases with the strength of the unions. One of the most pleasing features in unionism is that the most powerful associations show least inclination to strike. Where the power to do evil is greatest, the will to use that power is least. Strength has been accompanied by intelligence and discretion. The Glass-makers' Society is composed of every man in the trade, and has, therefore, so to speak, an entire monopoly; and yet, strange and gratifying to relate, they seldom have any dispute. The masters frequently consult with the representatives of the union, and if the former wish to engage additional hands they communicate with the latter, and men are instantly found. It is to be hoped that the facts to which attention is here directed will be sufficient to remove the hatred to unionism of those who believe that trade unions are the cause of strikes. A union does, indeed, render a strike possible, but it cannot cause one. As has been aptly said, to maintain that unions are the cause of strikes, is the same as saying that gunpowder is the cause of war.

There were strikes before there were trade unions, and it is a fact worth remembering that the most violent strikes have been where unions did not exist.

Perhaps, however, the strongest argument in favor of the efficacy of trade unionism is the rapidity with which its principles are spreading amongst the workingmen. If unionism did not benefit the workingman—did not, that is, carry out its object—the workingman would leave it; and were not the advantages he receives of a very definite and material nature, he would not submit to the heavy tax upon his wages which his society demands—a tax considerably more than half of the amount demanded from him by the Imperial Exchequer. The men, however, do not leave the union. In 1859 it was estimated that the number of members of trade unions was 600,000; in 1870 it had, it was calculated, increased to 800,000. In 1874 I estimated the number at 1,500,000; and two years later Mr. George Howell fixed the membership of the different societies at 1,600,000. In 1870 Mr. Thornton estimated that only about 10 per cent. of the workmen were members of unions, but he added that "at the present rate of proselytism it will take but a few years more for all eligible workmen in this country to become converts to unionism, and enrolled members of trade societies." Since Mr. Thornton wrote, the "rate of proselytism" has wonderfully increased. The five largest societies have doubled the number of their members in sixteen years. Rapid as has been the the progress of trade unionism, there is, therefore, ample room for further development. Indeed, trade unions are as yet in their infancy. They recognize this, and many of them are exercising themselves to bring non-unionists to see the wisdom of entering their portals. It is to be hoped their efforts will be crowned with success, and that in a very few years every working man will belong to a union of his trade.

Years ago trade unions were considered too insignificant for notice. The Press entirely ignored them, and publishers refused to print literature concerning them. When their existence was at last recognized, they were treated with an uncompromising hostility—they were regarded as enemies to social order and progress. To be a trade unionist was to be a "dangerous character," and that trade unions ought to be suppressed was the general opinion of what is called the respectable portion of the community. All this is now changed; trade unions are not only acknowledged to be justifiable, but necessary. Magazine editors throw open their pages to the unions' champions, and even the trade union officers themselves contribute articles to the leading publications of the day. The representatives of unions hold converse with Cabinet ministers, and the assistance of the societies is eagerly sought by candidates for parliamentary honors. The proceedings of the trade congresses are telegraphed from one end of the kingdom to the other. Unions are now acknowledged as a power for "good," and, to crown all, they have succeeded in placing three of their secretaries in the House of Commons itself, and there is every likelihood, ere long, of many more being returned as members of that assembly.

It was discovered that what unionists wanted was not to rob capital, but obtain for labor its rights. It was hoped that the employers would see the question in this light; and one of the most distressing features in the discussion of this question is the violent hostility, the determination to fight, the desire for war, displayed in the programme of "the National Federation of Associated Employers of Labor." That document, however, testifies to the power and efficacy of trade unions, which is the point at present under consideration. Amidst a good deal of misrepresentation the employers acknowledge that the unionists have an "elaborate organization." "Few are aware," they say, "of the extent, compactness of organization, large resources, and great influence of trade unions. They have an annual congress at which an increasing number of unions are

represented each year." "They have the control of enormous funds, which they expend freely in furtherance of their objects, and the proportion of their earnings which the operatives devote to the service of their leaders is startling." We should think so, to the mind of a selfish master. The associations "are federated together, acting in common accord under able leaders." "They have a well-paid and ample staff of leaders, most of them experienced in the conduct of strikes, many of them skilful as organizers, all forming a class apart, a profession, with interests distinct from, though not necessarily antagonistic to, those of the workpeople they lead." "They have, through their command of money, the imposing aspect of their organization, and partly, also, from the mistaken humanitarian aspirations of a certain number of literary men of good standing [*sic* 'mistaken' men, *i. e.*, such as the late J. S. Mill, Prof. Beesley, Frederic Harrison, Henry Crompton, W. T. Thornton, and others], a large array of literary talent, which is prompt in their service on all occasions of controversy. They have their own Press as a field for those exertions. Their writers have free access to some of the leading London journals. They organize frequent meetings at which paid speakers inoculate the working classes with their ideas, and urge them to dictate terms to candidates for Parliament . . . . They have a standing Parliamentary Committee, and a programme, and active members of Parliament are energetic in their service. They have the attentive ear of the minister of the day, and their communications are received with instant and respectful attention. They have a large representation of their own body in London whenever Parliament is likely to be engaged in the discussion of the proposals they have caused to be brought before it. Thus, untrammelled by pecuniary considerations, and specially set apart for this peculiar work, without other clashing occupations, they resemble the staff of a well-organized, well-provisioned army, for which everything that foresight and preoccupation in a given purpose could provide is at command. . . . These results are the deserved reward of the superiority of the trade unionists over the employers in those high qualities of foresight, generalship, and present self-sacrifice, for the sake of future advantage [what an admission !], which form necessary elements in the success of every organized society." Truly, if there were any doubts as to the fitness of trade unions to attain their objects, the National Federation of Associated Employers of Labor has removed that doubt. Have the trade unions succeeded? Ask the federated employers. There can be no better proof, not only of the power, but of the justice of trade unionism, than the document from which the above quotations are taken.

Although, then, trade unions have proved themselves thoroughly fit and able to carry out the main objects for which they were formed, yet it cannot be denied that, in regard to one portion of their programme, they have not shown the same tact and ability. There is the authority of the chief actuaries in the country for saying that the insurance funds—as they may be called—of some of the trade unions are based upon false data. The amounts expended under this head are for sickness, superannuation, accidents, funerals, etc., and the sum total thus expended is very large, in some instances much greater than is spent in conducting a strike or opposing a lock-out.*

As has been already pointed out, such benevolent notions had very little to do with the formation of a union. They were mere subterfuges tacked to the charter of a union because it was illegal for them to exist without them. When they were "registered," however, they had a sort of quasi-legal existence, and could, at any rate, meet legally. It is probable that the care and attention of the original members would be devoted more to the immediate advantage of increased wages than in calculating premiums for a sick and burial fund. Probably, also, the actuarial abilities of the first promoters of unions were not very great. On the other hand, it must be admitted that benevolent funds and kindred funds attached to trade unions both attract members and retain them. In this respect they are a source of strength, because each man is bound to obedience under the penalty of losing all the money he has subscribed for his support in sickness and old age.

That unions force masters to pay bad workmen the same wages as good workmen is not true, and the very idea would be scouted by all sensible unionists. The notion that such is the case is, however, very general. A uniform rate of pay exists in the army, navy, Government offices, and other institutions, in which aristocrats have been able to appropriate the "maximum" of pay, leaving a meagre residuum to their less fortunate brethren; but the trade unionists have not yet learned to practise such injustice. True, the unions sometimes agree upon a minimum rate of wages, but this is quite another thing. If a man be not worth that minimum no employer need employ him, while if he be a man of superior skill, or extraordinary working ability, there is no limit to the amount of wages an employer may feel inclined to give him. Of course, where wages are paid by the day, a uniform rate natually springs in existence.

* The seven largest unions spent £220,095 in 1881 in the above-named benefits.

It is, however, agreed upon between the employers and men. It is a mere conventional arrangement, and may be abandoned by either side as soon as it is found unjust or oppressive. It must be remembered that when wages have settled down to a "uniform rate," that rate is always below the average, and is therefore a gain to the masters. It is a gain to them in another respect. So far from placing the competent on the same level, says that gentlemen, "this 'uniform rate' has been bitterly complained of, as excluding the incompetent altogether. At the Bradford meeting in 1874, one of the speakers gave, as a reason against trade unions, that he was not able to earn the usual rates, and as the union would not allow any of its members to work for less, he could get no employment while he was a member, and so he left." A "minimum rate" is the rate which the least competent unionist is worth, and if the man cannot come up to that standard the trade society cares not how soon he leaves it. In practice, the masters never complain of this "minimum" or "uniform" rate. They know the advantages of it too well to indulge in any such complaint. It is only heard as an argument when they are airing their grievances, and laying the blame of every evil under the sun to the action of trade unions. It is a kind of reasoning which may fairly be considered a special plea.

It has been shown, 1st, That trade unions are the natural growth of natural laws, and that their development has been marvellously rapid; 2nd, That their faults (now diminishing) are not inherent or essential, but are either excrescences or mere copies from other corporations; 3rd, That the object of unionism is a legitimate and a noble one; and 4th, That their fitness to attain that object is abundantly proved by the brilliant success which has characterized their efforts. It remains to consider what has been the influence of that success, to which task the following chapter will be devoted.

CHAPTER V.

TRADE UNIONS—THEIR INFLUENCE.

Effects of high wages—Desire to retain a high social standard—Well-paid labor remunerative to the capitalist—Foreign competition—High wages does not mean high prices—The high price of coal and the colliers—Co-operation—Trade unions stimulate invention—Expenditure by the working classes—Advantages of shorter hours—Self-improvement—Moral influence of trade unions—Endeavor to make good workmen—Educational influence of trade unions—Political influence—Future of trade unions—Legal requirements—Class distinctions—Good conduct of unionists insisted upon—Mutual assistance—The union offices storehouses of statistics—The British Association on trade unions—Recapitulation and conclusion.

It remains to consider—

(*a*) What is the influence of trade unions on the trade of the country?

(*b*) What is their moral effect on those who belong to them?

It is, indeed, the "higgling of the market," as Adam Smith calls it, which determines prices; and those who do not "higgle," even when "shopping," will generally pay more than the market rate for their goods. Strikes, then, are not only legitimate, but they are the inevitable result of commercial bargaining for labor. They are no more opposed to trade than are lockouts. If a man may say to his men, or to a portion of them: "Business is slack, I give you a week's notice," surely when the state of trade is reversed the men may say, "Trade is brisk, give us more wages, or take a week's notice." "I do not hesitate to say," says one who is worth hearing* "that the association of laborers, of a nature similar to trade unions, far from being a hindrance to a free market for labor, are the necessary instrumentality of that free market—the indispensable means of enabling the sellers of labor to take due care of their own interests under a system of competition." It seems strange that persons can be found who will deny that all legal means employed by those who live by labor, to increase the remuneration for that labor, or to shorten the hours of labor—which amounts to the same thing—or to render their means of living more secure, are no more a violation of the principles of trade than is the conduct of a dealer who withholds his goods from the market in order to raise their price.

It has been shown in the previous chapter that one of the great results of trade unionism has been to raise wages, and under this head, therefore, it is a no less important inquiry—What are the effects of advanced wages on the trade of the

* Mr. J. S. Mill.

country? Now, high wages—*i. e.* not only a greater number of dollars a week, but no diminution in their purchasing power—cannot be otherwise than a great blessing. A great deal has been said on the wasteful way in which the extra earnings of the workingmen were squandered in 1870 and the years before, and this will be treated of in the sequel. All a man's extra earnings, however, were not wasted. Some portion of them was, doubtless, spent in sober gratification, and in increasing the comfort of the household. Now, one of the articles in which there has been increased consumption is tea. Let us ask, therefore, what is the effect of an increased consumption of tea? It signifies, in the first place, that more ships have been required to fetch the tea from China, to build which ships more men were required, and to man them more men were wanted. The ships had to be rigged, which was good for the ropemakers and the sailcloth manufacturers, as well as several other industries. Then when the tea arrived here, it required more warehouses and employed more warehousemen, as well as an additional number of carriers, both by rail and road, to distribute it over the country; it required more paper to wrap it in parcels, more string to tie them with. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine any industry whatever that does not receive some advantage from the increase in the consumption of any single article; and it may be a consolation to cosmopolitans to be reminded that the processes here alluded to are not confined in their advantages to this country, but stimulate in a similar way the various trades in the distant land which cultivated the plant; and thus two nations mutually benefit each other, and feel that they have an interest in each other's prosperity. This, however, is not all. The tea is not sent here for nothing; we send out other commodities in exchange for it. The cotton fabrics from Lancashire, the woollen cloths from Yorkshire, hardware goods from Birmingham, and steel and iron manufactures from Sheffied, are gathered to our ports and sent to the east, employing labor at every process, and whenever they are moved, from the time the raw material is landed on our shores until the time that it is delivered over to the consumer or the wearer in a far distant land. When the collier's wife buys an alpaca dress, she little thinks how much the world has been set in motion to enable her to do so—how that Salt wove it, Ripley dyed it, Lairds built the ship to fetch it, Whitworths made the tools in order that Platt might make the machines, in order that it might be spun, woven, dyed, pressed, before it reached the dressmaker, who used a needle made by Milward, and thread by Brooks. An increase in the consumption of a commodity, therefore, gives work to thousands who would be otherwise idle, and has a tendency to raise wages nearer and nearer to the "just rate," which has ever been such a bone of contention, This is the great point to remember—when men are earning money they spend it. They buy more furniture for their homes, more clothes for their back, more beer for their cellar, more and better food. It is only when wages are low that, like Christopher Sly, they have "no more doublets than backs, no more stockings than legs, nor no more shoes than feet." The prosperity of the workingman, then, increases the prosperity of the butcher, the baker, the publican, the grocer, the tailor, the draper, and all the manufacturers and industries upon which these trades depend. It may, indeed, be the prosperity of the nation which causes high wages; but it is equally certain that high wages maintain and increase that prosperity.*

The workingmen, having once tasted the sweets of a prosperous condition, do not like to return to their old ways of poverty and squalor. They are always found, therefore, struggling to maintain their wages at the maximum point they have ever reached. The reluctance which is shown to submit to a necessary reduction is evidence in proof of this. Now it has been shown by Ricardo, Mill, and others, that the minimum rate of wages is found amongst men in that condition below which they do not choose to live. If these men can be improved in their condition, and when that "improvement is of a signal character, and a generation grows up which has always been used to an improved scale of comfort, the habits of this new generation, in respect to population, become formed upon a higher minimum, and the improvement in their condition becomes permanent." Here, then, is an object worth striving for—a "permanent" raising of wages—at any rate, so permanent that it will not fall for one generation—truly a consummation devoutly to be wished, and one which may be reached, not only without injury to the capitalist, but to his material prosperity and advantage. On the other hand, a permanent fall in wages means a deterioration in the "minimum" condition. When men begin to fall, they descend more rapidly than they rise, and in a few weeks will forget the comforts they enjoyed for a few months. *Facilis decensus Averno.* There can be no doubt that it was this "keeping down" in the years gone by that permanently injured the condition of

* The shopkeepers know this, and often assist to maintain a strike by giving the men credit while they are out of work. Experience has taught them that when men have high wages they spend them, and they therefore assist the men to obtain an advance, knowing that they themselves will share the benefits.

the agricultural laborers, from which injury they are only now recovering. There can be no higher mission for trade unions than that of raising the condition of the working men of this country to such an extent and for such a length of time that the point reached becomes the accepted minimum, and that any change at all must be in an upward direction.

The laborers, however, must not expect to derive all the advantages of high wages at once. They must remember that if enhanced wages cause the price of the commodity produced to be enhanced, the price is raised to them as well as to others. If the demand of the cotton operatives raise the price of shirts, the cotton operatives must pay more for their shirts just the same as other people. There is, however, this to be considered, that men produce faster than they consume. Each man produces more than is necessary for his own support. When a man has made a plough he can make another before that one is worn out. The more there are made the more there will be wanted until all are supplied, which for practical purposes may at present be considered a very remote future. The supply creates the demand. Stockings were not inquired for (because they were not wanted) until they were invented ; and if to-morrow we had double the quantity we have to-day, it might be possible to sell them at half the present price without reducing wages at all. It is quite possible that wages may be enhanced, prices diminished, and profits increased, at one and the same time, as those familiar with the use of newly invented machinery are well aware. This explains a paradoxical appearance at the present day, that all over the world there is a tendency of wages to rise, and at the same time a universal tendency of all materials to cheapen. Unionism helps both these tendencies, and is thus a double blessing. It is probable, though not certain, that profits will be called upon to make the principal sacrifice in the future. At any rate this is to be hoped. Hitherto the consumer has been—to use a vulgar but expressive word—fleeced ; and it is time that the incidence of injustice be either shifted or annihilated.

Although, however, a rise in the price of labor all round, taxes, so to speak, the laborers themselves, yet it does not tax them to the full extent of the advance. There is a race of beings called "non-producers"—a class "sometimes innocent, generally useless, often noxious." Now a rise in wages all round means that some of the luxuries of the non-producing class are being metamorphosed into extra comforts or luxuries for the producing class. This is a pure gain to the producer, in addition to other gains which result from the improvement of his position. The only way by which laborers could be deprived of the benefits of increased wages, would be by the non-laboring class setting to work and producing something. They would then share in the advantages of the increased prosperity, instead of, as now, sacrificing a portion of their means, and this portion is divided amongst the producers. So long, however, as they toil not, neither do they spin, and garner what they have not gathered, they cannot complain that they contribute towards the cost of those who work.

It must not be thought, however, that well-paid labor is unremunerative to the capitalist. The contrary is the fact. Indeed, that style of labor for which no wages—in the ordinary sense—are paid, is the least remunerative of any. Slaves will not work. The low state of civilization and the ignorance of even the simplest laws in which it is found necessary to keep human beings, in order that they may submit to slavery, do more to prevent them from working hard than the lash does to make them work at all. It was pointed out some time ago that "two Middlesex mowers will mow in a day as much grass as six Russian serfs ; and in spite of the dearness of provisions in England, and their cheapness in Russia, the mowing of a quantity of hay which would cost an English farmer a copeck will cost a Russian proprietor three or four copecks." It was, in short, considered as proven that in Russia, where everything was cheap, the labor of a serf was doubly as expensive as that of a laborer in England. Men will not work their very best unless they have an incentive to do so. This great truth has at last made itself known to some of our great capitalists. Sir Thomas Brassey and other large employers have found out that underpaid labor is by no means economical. Here are a few proofs—When the North Devon Railway was being made, men were working at 2*s*. a day at first, then 2*s*. 6*d*., and then 3*s*. 6*d*. Nevertheless it was found that the work was executed more cheaply at the highest rate than at the lowest rate. So also in carrying out the large sewage works in Oxford Street, London, bricklayers were gradually raised from 6*s*. to 10*s*. a day, and at the higher rate of wages bricks were laid at a cheaper rate ; while at the building of Basingstoke station one London workman at 5*s*. 6*d*. a day did more work than three country ones at 3*s*. 6*d*. each. Many other instances might be added, all showing that intelligent workmen well paid are cheaper than bad workmen ill paid. As Mr. Frederic Harrison puts it : "The workman whose intelligence requires no more than the minimum of supervision is a cheap bargain even at the maximum wages." "It is said by one

of our factory inspectors that in France one workman looks after 14 spindles. In England one minder and two assistants can manage a mule with 2,200 spindles. It is an obvious economy to employ such a minder at even higher rates as compared with the French. This is the progress by which, in our cotton industry, as in so many others, wages have been rising, profits have been growing, and goods have been cheapened all at the same time." Increased wages are always to be got when there is an increase in the product of labor, although even the rate of wages be lower. Thus a spinner in Glasgow (Messrs. Houldsworth's) employed on a mule, and spinning cotton 120 hanks to the pound, produced in 1823, working 74½ hours in the week, 46 pounds of yarn, his nett weekly earnings for which amounted to 26*s.* 7*d.* In 1833, the rate of wages having in the meantime been reduced 13½ per cent., and the time of working having been lessened to 69 hours, the spinner was enabled, by the greater perfection of the machinery, to produce on a mule of the same number of spindles, 52½ pounds of yarn of the same fineness, and his nett weekly earnings advanced to 29*s.* 10*d.* Similar causes raised the remuneration of the fast spinners from 5*s.* 6*d.* a week in 1871 by successive gradations to 9*s.* in 1872; and almost every trade can tell the same story. Sir Thomas Brassey strengthens this position by pointing out that in the construction of the Paris and Rouen Railway, although the English navvies earned 5*s* a day, while the Frenchmen employed received only 2*s.* 6*d.* a day, yet it was found, on comparing the cost of two adjacent cuttings in precisely similar circumstances, that the excavation was made at a lower cost per cubic yard by the English navvies than by the French laborers; and it must be remembered, too, that the former worked one and a half hours a day less than the latter. Another authority has told us that, a few years ago, ten laborers in Ireland raised the same quantity of produce that four laborers raised in England, and the result of the work of the one was generally inferior in quality to that of the other. Quarry-owners tell the same tale, and it was the opinion of the late Sir Francis Crossley that our agricultural laborers would do more work if they were better paid.

Although, therefore, wages increase, labor does not become dearer. This is very gratifying, because it can hardly be doubted that the spread of education, and the comforts which follow from it, will induce the working man to work less hard, and for shorter time, for increased wages, than he has hitherto done. The facts above stated, too, should serve to lay that frightful hobgoblin—"foreign competition." A ship can hardly be launched in America, or a furnace lighted in Belgium, but England is assured that in consequence of strikes the trade is leaving the country. The most trade will always be found where there are the best workmen, and the argument of these pages shows how these are to be made. It is very amusing to notice that while British capitalists pretend to be alarmed at foreign competition, every nation under the sun is afraid of English competition. When our cotton manufacturers were earning 12*s.* to 15*s.* a week, those in France, Belgium, and Germany were earning 7*s.* 3*d.* to 9*s.* 7d., and those in Russia were content with 2*s.* 4*d.* to 2*s.* 11*d.*; and yet the one thing dreaded by the continental nations mentioned was actually the competition of the British.

Professor Cairns, a careful and thoughtful economist, admits that it is often better to employ good workmen at high wages than to employ bad workmen at low wages. It is strange, however, that in another argument the Professor overlooks that admission. He places the power of a trade union at a lower point than any other economist who has given them a word of praise. He states that all the union can do is to enforce a rise when it should take place—and not always then; but he thinks them incompetent to obtain a rise when the economic conditions do not warrant a rise. Surely Professor Cairns misunderstands the object of a trade union, if he think a part of its programme is to attempt to obtain a rise when economic conditions do not warrant such rise. Failure would be certain to follow such a policy. The differences between employers and employed do not arise from any such notion, but from the general policy of the masters in systematically refusing to acknowledge that the economic conditions are ever such as to warrant a rise. As Professor Cairns says, the question is: "Is there a margin of wealth which workmen by any combination can conquer?" The men think there is not a mere margin, but a vast territory to which they are entitled, and the experiences of the past fill them with sure and certain hopes as to the future. They see the final result, and are determined upon its speedy realization. Nor do they fear that which Professor Cairns dreads, viz., that in consequence of advanced wages, capital must be withdrawn, and wages therefore fall. Such can only be the case when wages are *unduly* advanced, about which there need be no alarm. At any rate, the workmen have no such fear. They are alive to the admission made by Professor Cairns, to which allusion has been made; and they are acquainted with the facts above given, showing that well-paid, intelligent artisans, when not over-worked, are always cheapest in the end.

It may be mentioned here, in parenthe-

sis, that although trade unions have a far more powerful influence over wages—constantly imparting an upward tendency—than Professor Cairns imagines, yet it is likewise an error on the part of those who think that trade unionism seeks to determine the rate of wages. It cannot do that; it cannot do more than affect them. A trade society may retard a fall or accelerate a rise, but it cannot change the law which regulates the fluctuations, or render permanent that which in its very essence is temporary.

It is at once seen that the instances of well-paid but remunerative labor, added to those facts which were adduced in support of a similar argument in the previous chapter in regard to the reduction of the hours of labor, show that the beneficial effects of the success of unionism on the trade of the country are not at the cost of the capitalist, but to his advantage and that that advantage is not less but greater by his paying higher wages for shorter hours.

It was very surprising to notice the facility with which the employers, in 1874, forced a general reduction of wages. Even if the fall in price demanded such a reduction—which is by no means clear—yet it is strange that the men so readily *believed* their employers. Great care is taken to register the prices of all commodities; very little attention is bestowed to registering the rates of wages. It is, I think, Mr. Frederic Harrison who points out that even newspapers, speaking of commodities, announce an "upward tendency," or a "slight improvement," or "an increased buoyancy;" but that no such steps are taken in regard to labor. On the other hand, "one of the most experienced engineers in England, the secretary of one of our most useful commissions, has repeatedly said that he never knew a labor question in which employers published the truth." The inconsistency of the employers, too, is often very startling. Thus when the West Yorkshire colliers demanded an increase of wages, because the price of coal had advanced, the reply of the owners was that the price of coal had nothing whatever to do with the rate of wages. No sooner, however, did coal fall than the owners demanded a reduction of wages, stating that although "the price of coal did not directly control the ratio of the rate of wages, yet they could not conceal from themselves that it had some effect, and that it was, at any rate, an index of the time when a rise or fall in wages should take place." It is a pity they did not see this when an increase was demanded! When, too, the men have asked for an advance of, say, 10 per cent., and the masters have not only refused it, but, as has often taken place, demanded a reduction of 10 per cent. out of sheer opposition, it is indeed surprising that the men have shown so much forbearance. With some few exceptions, the men have asked for "Peace on fair terms;" and the employers have answered, "War, and an unconditional surrender." The men have asked for bread, and have received a stone. One of the best influences that trade unionism can have on the trade of the country is the one which teaches the employers that what is sought is not a favor, but justice; and that as the manufacturer makes as much as he can out of the dealer, so will the weaver make as much as he can out of the manufacturer. The sooner the employers see this the better. Professor Fawcett says "there must constantly be a deadening influence depressing industry as long as antagonism of interest continues between employers and employed, and the noblest, highest, and in every sense best efforts of trade unionism are those that tend to remove that antagonism."

There can, indeed, be little doubt that the unions have made many a great and praiseworthy sacrifice in submitting to reductions. In order to avoid a collision the men have yielded their just rights with very little grumbling. It by no means follows that because coal falls in price that wages must immediately fall. In order to justify a fall in wages, it is necessary that the price of coal (or, of course, any other commodity that may be under consideration) should fall below that point at which an advance took place. The men have a right to resist any attempt to reduce wages until such a state of affairs comes about.

There is another economic effect of trade unionism which deserves at least a passing mention. The knowledge that men have the power to strike, stimulates the inventive faculties of employers. A strike is not always confined in its effects to the particular branch of the trade that makes demands from the employer. A strike of puddlers enforces idleness on other ironworkers; while "finishers" cannot work if "fullers" won't. It is, therefore, to the advantage of the employers to have the various processes of manufacture as independent of each other as possible, so that if one department strikes, the necessity of another being idle may be reduced to a minimum. This is accomplished by the introduction of machinery, rendering less and less necessary the skill of workmen. Mr. Nasmyth, by mechanical contrivances, reduced the number of his men from 3000 to 1500 without reducing the production. It has been observed that, in consequence of almost all great strikes, the employers have set their wits to work, as the saying is, and have invented such improvements that they—and through them the world—have been very great gainers. A notable instance of this is found in the history of

the struggle in 1851 of the engineers with their masters, to which reference has been already made. The process alluded to is going on at present very rapidly. In the iron industries especially, the improvements in material, and the almost daily introduction of newly invented labor-saving contrivances have resulted in one man being able to do what two and a half men were required to do thirty years ago, to say nothing of the important fact that the material is ten times more durable than it was, and the machines wear out much more slowly. These facts not only bear out the argument, but should induce the men to strengthen their unions, to compete with the displaced labor; and, wherever possible, reap two profits by becoming owners of the machines they construct, as was long ago suggested by the late Mr. John Kane.

The doctrine that that policy is best which gives the greatest good to the greatest number, has become an axiom. Now, in every community the majority must always consist of working men and their families, and it does seem a natural way of proceeding that, if you give a greater happiness to a greater number, a step is being made towards realizing Bentham's celebrated dictum. The moral effects, then, of high wages are great. Of course they might be greater, but a little experience will bring that about. Strikes, therefore, and the trade societies which render strikes possible, are, for these various reasons, not a mischievous, but, on the contrary, a valuable part of the existing machinery of society.

It would be a work of supererogation to discuss here the great advantages of more leisure to the working class, but as it is one of the objects of a trade union to obtain shorter hours, and as the realization of such a policy has a very beneficial effect on those who belong to trade societies, the question cannot be passed over without a few words.* The advantages of recreation are acknowledged, but few steps are taken to afford the means to indulge in it.

The men in various trades are not only showing a desire to generally improve themselves, but to obtain a deeper knowledge of their own particular trades. Some time ago, Mr. Wilcock, the then president of the London Royal Lodge of the General Union of Carpenters, of England, initiated a series of lectures to its members, and the president himself delivered one on "The Knowledge and Use of Scales as Applied to the Building Trade." The following month Mr. Dise gave a lecture on freehand drawing. At present, in London, there are several technical classes conducted by artisans, and the City of Guilds Institute as well as the Polytechnic Institution, and the Artisans' Technical Association, are doing much to promote that object.

There can be no doubt as to the effect of thus teaching men that what their hands find to do should be done with all their might, however weak that might may be. Men are made for something better than to be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Indeed, the plan of lecturing just referred to, rapidly bears fruit, and some of the members of the union mentioned have, on account of their superior knowledge of their trade, been appointed head foremen to some of the principal firms. Other unions have similar means of improving their members and raising their tastes; and it is to be hoped that, ere long, the practice will be universal. The more time the unions can obtain for their men to do this (and workmen thus educated will be better workmen) the better it will be; and it is, therefore, for the unions to struggle. with all the means in their power, in order that the men may get as much wages as they can (without infringing upon that limit when their productions would be unremunerative) for as little work as possible, performed with a minimum of inconvenience.

Indeed, the great advantage of union men over non-union men is being discovered by the employers, and they are beginning to acknowledge the fact. A Liverpool carpenter recently told the author that the bosses knew the union men were the best workmen, and that it was a regular thing to give them one penny per hour more than the rate fixed upon by the society. This is not surprising, as no man can be a union carpenter unless he be in good health, have worked a certain number of years at the trade, be a good workman, of steady habits and good moral character.

Unionists are not desirous of having incompetent or unsteady workmen as associates. They can see that such men do as much to lower wages as anything else. The good workmen know this, and they crowd into the unions as fast as they can. Of course it is not maintained here that all unionist workmen are proficient. There are, as a matter of fact, several unionists who are not good workmen; but there are few good workmen who are not unionists. The men out of union are, for "the most part, either inferior workmen, employed on inferior work at reduced rates, or those who have belonged to it and are erased. Of these last, some left because they did not wish to pay to it, or, indeed, to anything

*It has already been pointed out that a long-hours day means dear labor. Mr. Thorold Rogers has shown, in his recent work, that it is also incompatible with good workmanship. Speaking of the excellent masonry of Merton Tower, Oxford, four hundred years old, he says, "I am persuaded that such perfect masonry would have been incompatible with a long-hours day!"

else that they could avoid; and the rest, by far the greatest number, are those who have been erased for non-payment through their unfortunate habits of intemperance, which left them no means of paying." The trade unions may fairly consider whether or not it comes within their province to take even stronger measures to ensure the efficiency of their members. A "more definite standard of efficiency" than at present might be decided upon, so that a man's union ticket would be a standard of competency, and accepted as such by the employers.

If something of this kind were practicable in every trade—and the unions have an excellent organization for carrying out the suggestion—it would be of infinite benefit to the community. The employers would readily acknowledge certificates of proficiency issued by the unions. It may be added that the unions are showing a laudable desire to take a high tone in regard to this matter. They have, over and over again, protested against the "scamping" of work and cheating of purchasers, against jerry building, sizing cotton, etc., etc. They are not "the fault of the artisan—they are his misfortune," says an official report, and continues: "We know, from experience, that the properly-trained and highly-skilled workman is the first to suffer by the shameful process. When circumstances press him into this circle of competition, he has to undergo a second apprenticeship to acquire this sleight-of-hand system, during which he earns less wages." Mr. Thomas Hughes thinks the unions "are powerful enough now to insist, if they choose to do so, that no unionist shall work where such practices prevail." Mr. Thorold Rogers takes a similar view, adding that the men should protect the public, denouncing and exposing "dishonest and scantling work." I may add that the desire of the workmen in the direction above indicated, is shown by the objection, on the part of artisans, to clerks and others studying in technical classes, lest such should learn just sufficient to be a dabbler at the trade, and thus cause to be thrown into the market a quantity of incompetent labor. The same feeling is shown in the desire for sound regulations in regard to apprentices, for it is obvious that any skilled trade, not protected by an apprenticeship system, must always occupy a low status.

The most important educational work which the trade unions are performing, is that of familiarizing the workman—and, for that matter, the employer as well—with the true relations of capital to labor. The unions are doing good work in another direction. Their attention is not solely confined to questions affecting capital and labor. The trade unions not only wish the laborers to be good workmen—they are also determined to make them good citizens, and are anxious to do away with all class distinctions. The men are beginning to feel "the glorious privilege of being independent." It is time they did. Nothing tends so much to degrade a class as the knowledge that it is dependent. The day has gone by when a man must feel loyal and dutiful to another simply because he has been born on his estate, or because he works in his factory. The men are willing enough to receive the ambassador of the employer with all due respect, but they demand (on the peril of a strike) that their own delegates shall be equally well received. It is now acknowledged that the demeanor most fitting towards the poor is that which is most fitting towards every one. The leaders of the unions have perceived that the general tendency of human progress is in this direction, and they have determined not to oppose, but to assist it.

It is not only part of the policy of trade unions to demand, as rights, those privileges which are now withheld from them, but also to render their members fit to exercise those rights. It has already been shown that civility to their employers, as well as sobriety, are essential before a man can become a practical trade unionist.

When men see rules, and subscribe to them, against certain wrong-doing and evil practices, they (for use doth breed a habit in a man) look upon those practices as *wrong*, and they soon become, in every way, better men. Not only do the unions take steps to prevent evil, they exert themselves to promote good.

A great deal is made by anti-unionists of the notion that when a man joins a union he loses his liberty, and becomes a slave to the union agent or the union officers. It may be very properly replied that a man, if he likes, has a right to give up his liberty. The argument, however, if such it can be called, is wrong in fact. The workman in delegating the task of asking more wages, instead of asking them personally, is no more giving up his liberty than a client is in hiring an advocate to plead for him to a jury. The men in a union come together of their own accord: they do not so, and do not remain so, unless they think it to their advantage; and they can leave the society whenever they like. To say that this is giving up one's liberty, is the same in principle as saying that a man in obeying certain laws of his country, of which he disapproves, is giving up his liberty. It has always been an acknowledged principle that a man may voluntarily submit to certain restrictions on his liberty for the common good.

The trade unionist, too, is much freer in regard to his union than is the citizen in regard to the State. It is with great difficulty the latter can throw off his obliga-

tions, and then but to rest under fresh restrictions; but the former can do so with the greatest facility, though, for reasons mentioned in a former chapter, he seldom avails himself of the opportunity.

Inasmuch, however, as most trade unions are benefit societies, they have all the influence (and none of the flummery) which flows from those bodies. To teach men to prepare for a rainy day, to lay by for old age, to protect themselves from poverty in case of accident or failing health, loss of tools, etc., and to reward merit and inculcate the principle of brotherly love and benevolence, are surely laudable objects, and so long as the criteria are sound, they cannot help but have a good influence upon those who are prudent enough to deny themselves to-day, in order that they may enjoy to-morrow.

These societies, too, are exceedingly useful in the mass of valuable statistics they collect. The death rates and the causes of death in various trades point to a field in which medical men may work to great advantage; while the fluctuations in the rates of wages, and the gradual shortening of hours present an equally interesting problem to political economists. This information, too, is given for, comparatively speaking, small districts, and the problems referred to can therefore be studied when local influences interfere with general laws. Altogether, there is ample food for both the student, the philosopher, and the statesman, in the vast amount of literature that is annually issued by the trade unions; and which, by the way, must keep employed a great number of printers, thus benefiting a trade by the mere action of recording the experience of their existence.

It has been pointed out that combination amongst workmen has existed ever since men had the intelligence to understand that they were oppressed by those whose position gave them the power to oppress. The power to combine became more and more generally acknowledged, until at length, in spite of unjust and partial laws, trade unions became a fact. From combinations against oppression they developed into associations having for their object the amelioration of the condition of the working class. It has also been shown that the organization of a trade union is pre-eminently fitted to carry out that object, and, as proof of that, it has been argued: 1st, That trade unions have succeeded in raising wages and reducing the number of working hours. 2d, That these reforms do not benefit the laborer at the cost of either the capitalist or the consumer; as, between certain limits, it is found that high pay and the prospect of an early cessation from work are such incentives to industry that the produce of labor is actually greater than under a system of long hours and low pay. 3d, That the workmen have such confidence in the benefits they derive from union, that, after the experience of "half a millennium," they are crowding into societies, into unions, in a greater ratio every year. 4th, That their declared object is to prevent strikes, and substitute arbitrations; and although the latter mode of settling disputes is often proposed by the men and refused by the masters, it is seldom proposed by the masters and still less often refused by the men. It has been argued further, that such being the objects of trade unions, and such their success in obtaining those objects, the influence of that success must be very beneficial; 1st, Because high wages means increased comforts, which are not only a social but a commercial advantage. High wages means increased production, also the double blessing just mentioned. 2d, Because high wages does not mean enhanced prices, but the contrary. 3d, Because the principles of trade unionism teach men the prudence of denying themselves something to-day, in order that they may have greater advantages to-morrow; and the duty of self-sacrifice, by calling upon them to contribute, out of their meagre wealth, towards the alleviation of the sufferings of their fellow-men. 4th, Because trade unions endeavor to obtain for the working classes more leisure for recreation and study. 5th, Because by lectures and other means, the unions endeavor to make their members better workmen; and by rules which stigmatize and punish the idle, the vicious, and the incompetent, do all in their power to make workmen better citizens. It makes clear to them that capital does not make the man, and that a laborer is no worse because he works. "Jack is as good as his master;" and the men know that if employers would only acknowledge this—if they would only meet their workmen as men on an equal footing with themselves, and discuss the wages system with them, as the late Mr. Brassey, Mr. E. Akroyd, Mr. W. E. Forster, and others were in the habit of doing—then strikes would be impossible.

It is really difficult to conceive how an institution with such noble objects, having attained those objects, can be anything but a great blessing to the community in which it is placed.

Trade unionism, then, has a great future before it. Its ultimate result cannot be otherwise than to convince both employer and employed that they are the truest friends, each of the other, for each derives his revenue from the other. The prosperity of the country is greatly due to the influence of unions on trade, and therefore that influence benefits the capitalist as well as the workman.

APPENDIX.

THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR—ITS HISTORY AND AIMS.

By P. J. McGuire.

The National Labor Union—Various national labor conventions, from 1866 to 1876—Industrial panic of 1873 to 1878—Sovereigns of Industry—Patrons of Husbandry—Industrial Brotherhood—Junior Sons of '76—International Labor Union—Amalgamated Labor Union—The Pittsburgh Convention of 1881—Formation of the Federation of Trades—Legislation secured in Congress—Negotiations with the Knights of Labor—The general eight-hour movement in May, 1886—Differences with the Knights of Labor—Birth of the American Federation of Labor—Its component parts and objects.

Early in the year 1866 the trades' assemblies of New York City and Baltimore issued a call for a National Labor Congress, and, in accordance with that appeal, one hundred delegates, representing sixty open and secret labor organizations of all kinds, and covering an area of territory extending from Portland, Me., to San Francisco, met in Baltimore, Md., on August 20. A number of the labor organizations there represented were merely local unions, but a great many were national and international bodies, such as ship carpenters, railroad men, miners, painters, carriers, window-glass blowers, stone masons, marble cutters and iron moulders.

At that convention committees were appointed to look into the expediency of introducing the eight-hour system, of taking political action, and forming a permanent national organization. The questions of public domain, the national debt, co-operative associations, strikes, and convict labor were fully discussed, and measures were adopted for the organization of sewing women—a movement which at this day is occupying the attention of labor circles in New York City. Among the many resolutions passed was one favoring the speedy restoration of agriculture in the South, and the upbuilding of that section upon a new basis of industrial advancement.

In the following year the second annual congress of the National Labor Union was held in Chicago, attended by over two hundred delegates, representing trades' unions in all the Northern States and in six Southern States. President Z. C. Whaley, in his report, urged that State organizations be formed, and this idea, together with the demand that the public domain should be reserved for actual settlers, has since been adopted bodily by the Knights of Labor. As may be seen, the National Labor Union was formed in imitation of the Trades' Union Congress of England, in which local bodies, not allowed to discuss politics in their meetings, could send delegates to the central body, and there deal with questions of a political nature and thus influence national legislation in favor of the working classes. But the political portion of the work was the smaller portion, for matters of a social and industrial character were dealt with to a greater extent.

Two conventions of the National Labor Union were held in 1868, one in May and the other in September. The first convened in Pittsburgh, and the principal act of that session was an alliance to co-operate with the Patrons of Husbandry and the Grangers. The September session was held in New York City, to take action regarding the general movement which was then going on in favor of the establishment of the eight-hour rule. In his address the chairman pointed out the need of closer coherence than had yet been attained between the different trades and callings, and recommended that a central head be established, to which all the trades' and labor unions should be subordinate. This idea was not strictly carried out, however, and the mistake in disregarding it was subsequently made plain. The annual convention of 1869 was held in Chicago; that of 1870 in Boston; that of 1871 in Philadelphia, and that of 1872, which was the last, wound up in Columbus, O. There it was decided to nominate a ticket for President of the United States, and David Davis, of Illinois, was chosen as the standard-bearer.

This drifting into political action provoked so much dissension that one local organization after another—believing that the National Labor Union had entered a field of operations for which it was not intended—withdrew its support, and interest was lost in the central body.

In the next year, 1873, the great panic swept upon the country and demolished the trades' unions. Most of them were built on a basis of very low dues and had no beneficial feature that would hold the members together when trades' questions failed to interest them, and, consequently, both the local unions and the national organization went down in the crash. The

distress of the winter of 1873–4, and the inability of organized labor to stem the reductions of wages that were taking place in every branch of industry, induced a number of leading trades' unionists to call another "Industrial Congress" in Rochester, N. Y., for April 14, 1874, with the intention of returning to the old lines of the National Labor Union, avoiding politics, and of forming a federation of the trades' and labor unions of the entire country. There was represented at this convention a secret organization, then known as the "Sovereigns of Industry," which was making great headway in the Eastern and Middle States, with a purpose of establishing co-operative stores and eliminating the "middle man" from commercial transactions. Another organization represented was that known as the "Industrial Brotherhood of the United States," also secret and somewhat of the character of the Knights of Labor.

In the convention there was a serious clash between the champions of these two bodies on the question of a permanent organization, some of the delegates desiring to form an order similar to the Industrial Brotherhood, and others favoring the Sovereigns of Industry plan. A platform was finally adopted, however, which was almost identical in every respect with the declaration of principles of the Knights of Labor, and from which the latter has copied.

The movement to form a permanent industrial congress, nevertheless, seemed to end with that session of the convention, and no further efforts were made in that direction until a call for a national convention, to be held at Tyrone, Pa., in December, 1875, was issued by a secret organization, which was at that time a promising rival of the Knights of Labor, entitled the "Junior Sons of '76." The design of this gathering was to form a combination of all the scattered fragments of the labor movement. Delegates were in attendance from the "Junior Sons of '76," the Knights of Labor, the Grangers, open trades' unions, and social democratic organizations, as they were called at that time. Their worthy designs did not materialize, however, but were dissipated in vain talk. The "Junior Sons" themselves were very short lived. After "76" had rolled away, no trace of them could be found. In that year they had engaged in politics as an order throughout Pennsylvania, and had elected several members of the Legislature on labor measures. After having done that, their mission seemed to have been fulfilled and they disbanded.

During the same period the Industrial Brotherhood, which was numerically weak, but extended through many sections of the country, was also attempting to outrival the Knights of Labor. Another order of a general and secret character had sprung up in the early part of 1877, known as the "International Labor Union," having branches in seventeen States. But little or nothing of national consequence was done by the trades' and labor unions until 1878, when they everywhere began to re-organize, and, profiting by their previous failures, laid the foundations of local unions upon a basis of high dues, introducing various beneficial features, such as sick, funeral, and disability benefits, and other financial provisions calculated to hold the members more firmly to the organization. These local bodies in turn combined and formed trades' assemblies, trades' councils, etc. In these central bodies Knights of Labor and trades' unionists were both united.

Coming up, however, to the preliminary steps that led ultimately to the formation of the American Federation of Labor, a call was issued conjointly by the "Knights of Industry" and a society known as the "Amalgamated Labor Union"—an offshoot of the Knights of Labor, composed of disaffected members of that order—for a convention to meet in Terre Haute, Ind., on August 2, 1881. The Amalgamated Labor Union had been organized in 1878, and was confined principally to Ohio and Indiana, while the Knights of Industry, with which it joined hands, was confined to Missouri and Illinois. The Terre Haute convention had for its object the establishment of a new secret order to supplant the Knights of Labor, although, on the face of the call, its object was stated to be to establish a national labor congress. There was a large representation of delegates present from St. Louis, Cleveland, Chicago, and other Western cities, but the only Eastern city represented was Pittsburgh. The trades' union delegates represented the largest constituency, but were less in number themselves than the delegates of the other societies. But, by the exercise of tact and diplomacy, the trades' union men, who were at that time also members of the Knights of Labor, successfully opposed the project of adding another new organization to the list of societies already in existence, and, for the time being, the friends of the proposed secret organization were defeated.

A call was published, however, for a subsequent convention to be held in Pittsburgh on November 19, 1881, and this gathering proved to be the most important of its kind that had thus far been held. The call for that convention was remarkable. It read in part:

"We have numberless trades' unions, trades' assemblies or councils, Knights of Labor, and various other local, national, and international labor unions, all engaged in the noble task of elevating and improving the condition of the working class.

But great as has been the work done by these bodies, there is vastly more that can be done by a combination of all these organizations in a federation of trades' and labor unions."

In accordance with the spirit of that call, the convention was organized at the date designated, with John Jarrett, at that time president of the Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, in the chair. One hundred and seven delegates were present, representing 262,000 workingmen, and a permanent organization was effected styled the "Federation of Organized Trades' and Labor Unions of the United States and Canada," and a congressional committee, like that which the Knights of Labor subsequently created, was appointed, consisting of Richard Powers, of the Seaman's Union, of Chicago; William H. Foster, of the International Typographical Union, of Cincinnati; Samuel Gompers, of the International Cigar Makers' Union, of New York; C. F. Burgman, of the Tailors' International Union, of San Francisco, and A. C. Rankin, of the Knights of Labor Iron Moulders, of Pittsburgh. Knights of Labor assemblies and trades' unions were equally represented, and it was thoroughly understood that the trades' unionists should preserve their form of organization and the Knights of Labor should maintain theirs, and that the two should work hand in hand for the thorough amalgamation of the working classes under one of these two heads, and that they should use every legitimate means to offset any movement designed to create any more fragments or divisions in the labor army.

A financial system was established and thirteen measures were adopted of a political character. They favored the compulsory education of children, the abolition of child labor, the passage of uniform apprentice laws, the enforcement of the eight-hour rule, the restriction of contract prison labor, and the abandonment of the store-order system. They advocated, also, a first lien for labor done, the repeal of the conspiracy laws against organized labor, the establishment of a bureau of labor statistics, the continuance of the protective tariff for American industry, the enactment of a national law to prevent the importation of foreign labor under contract, and urged that organized labor should have representation in all law-making bodies, in order to secure beneficial legislation. Supplementary resolutions were also passed, setting forth the necessity of legislation securing restrictions to Chinese labor, the licensing of stationary engineers, governmental inspection of factories and workshops, the sanitary supervision of food and wells, and an employers' liability law. Many, if not all, of these ideas are now taken up and presented by the Knights of Labor.

At this same session it was decided to choose a committee of three and invite the co-operation of a committee of three from the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades' Union Congress of Great Britain, and of a committee of three from the Syndical Chambers of France, these nine to form a labor commission, whose duty it should be to proceed to Ireland, hear evidence and acquaint themselves with the causes of discontent in that country; thence to proceed to London and Paris, make investigations of the condition of the working classes there, and publish their report. But, from want of action on the part of the trades' unions of England, the project fell through.

In the interim until the next convention the Legislative Committee of the Federation set to work and secured several hearings before congressional committees of the House and Senate, which resulted in the appointment of a special Senate Committee, of which Senator H. W. Blair, of New Hampshire, was chairman, to make a thorough investigation of the labor question. Repeated hearings were had before this committee in favor of an enforcement of the eight-hour law and the erection of a national bureau of labor statistics, and in opposition to a bill introduced by Congressman Townsend, of Cleveland, to make the lake seamen, if they should ever strike or use their influence upon others during a strike, guilty in the eyes of the law of mutiny at sea, and liable to punishment accordingly. So strong was the opposition to this bill that it was shortly afterward buried in the committee.

On all the various subjects noted above, bills were introduced by the Federation and placed in the hands of prominent Congressmen for enactment. From the entire number the passage of a law requiring the formation of a national bureau of labor statistics, and of a law preventing the importation of contract labor, was finally secured in 1883—more than any labor organization had yet accomplished.

The second convention of the Federation was held in Cleveland, O., on November 21, 1882, when Samuel Gompers was elected permanent president, and William H. Foster, subsequently of Philadelphia, permanent secretary. Fearing that some disaster might overtake this organization, as had been the fate of its predecessors, a manifesto was issued to the subordinate unions, discountenancing political action, on the ground that the Federation had been organized as a purely industrial body. The manifesto set forth further, in admirable language:

"We favor this Federation because it is the most natural and assimilative form of bringing the trades' and labor unions together. It preserves the industrial au-

tonomy and distinctive character of each trade and labor union, and, without doing violence to their faith or traditions, blends them all in one harmonious whole—a 'federation of trades' and labor unions.' Such a body looks to the organization of the working classes as workers, and not as 'soldiers' (in the present deprecatory sense) or politicans. It makes the qualities of a man as a worker the only test of fitness, and sets up no political or religious test of membership. It strives for the unification of all labor, not by straining at an enforced union of diverse thought and widely separated methods, not by prescribing a uniform plan of organization, regardless of their experience or interests, not by antagonizing or destroying existing organizations, but by perserving all that is integral or good in them and by widening their scope so that each, without destroying their individual character, may act together in all that concerns them. The open trades unions, national and international, can and ought to work side by side with the Knights of Labor, and this would be the case were it not for men either over-zealous or ambitious, who busy themselves in attempting the destruction of existing unions to serve their own whims and mad iconoclasm. This should cease and each should understand its proper place and work in that sphere, and if they desire to come under one head or affiliate their affairs, then let all trades' and labor societies, secret or public, be represented in the Federation of Trades' and Labor Unions."

As will be observed from reading this manifesto, the friction between the Federation and the Knights of Labor had already become serious and irritating. The next convention, that of 1883, was held in New York, on August 21. Samuel Gompers, was re-elected president, and Frank K. Foster, of Boston, was chosen secretary, and arbitration was favored instead of strikes. The eight-hour rule was insisted upon and laws were demanded to limit the dividends of corporations and to introduce governmental telegraph systems. A committee was appointed to wait on the national conventions of both the Republican and Democratic parties the following year, and secure the insertion of planks in their respective platforms favorable to the interests of the labor movement; and the Legislative Committee was instructed to present a bill to Congress creating a national Department of Industry or Labor. This project also, like many of those foregoing, now strenuously advocated by the Knights of Labor as an idea of their own. Before the convention adjourned another committee was appointed to confer with the Knights of Labor and other kindred organizations with a view to securing a thorough unification and consolidation. Correspondence was subsequently opened with the Knights of Labor on the subject, but, as is known, the proposition was repulsed.

The next convention was held in Chicago on October 7, 1884. Steps were taken for a universal agitation in behalf of the eight-hour system, and the 1st of May, 1886, was fixed upon as the date for the general inauguration of the plan. The question was submitted to each local organization represented for action, those voting in favor of it to be bound by it and those voting in opposition to pledge themselves to sustain the other pioneers in the movement. Among the organizations that decided to inaugurate the system were the cigar makers, the furniture workers, the German printers, and the carpenters. As will be remembered, the cigar makers and the German printers succeeded, and the furniture workers compromised on nine hours, while the carpenters succeeded in establishing eight hours in seven cities and compromised on nine hours in eighty-four cities. The agitation at that time for the introduction of the eight-hour work-day was very popular among the trades of New York, Boston, Cincinnati, Chicago, St. Louis, Washington, and Baltimore.

The Anarchists, members of the International Workingmen's party, who had hitherto violently opposed the eight-hour movement and condemned it on every occasion, now seized upon it as an instrument, it is believed, to further their propaganda, and the mildest of their agitators became prominent in their attendance at eight-hour meetings. The throwing of the bombs at the Haymarket meeting in Chicago on May 5, 1886, however, had a very depressing effect on the eight-hour movement, as President Samuel Gompers declared to Governor Oglesby, inasmuch as the trade-union element in general did not wish to be associated or connected in the popular mind with the Anarchists or their methods, and, consequently, the measure has not been pressed since.

At the convention of 1885, held in Washington on December 8, attention was principally directed to strengthening the national organization, and preparing for the eight-hour work-day. The secretary reported that he had communicated with the Knights of Labor, inviting its co-operation with the Federation in the enforcement of the system, but that the General Assembly at Hamilton, Ont., had adjourned without taking any action or expressing any sympathy for the movement.

The convention of 1886 was originally called to meet in St. Louis in the latter part of the year, but the stirring events incident to the eight-hour strikes, and the difficulties existing with the Knights of Labor, led to the memorable conference of

the officers of the trades' unions at Donaldson's Hall, in this city, on May 18, where defensive measures were outlined to protect the trades' unions and to secure harmony with the Knights of Labor. A committee attended the special session of the Knights' General Assembly, at Cleveland, on May 26, and after several days' waiting, marked by long and animated discussions in the General Assembly on trade-union issues, no definite assurances were obtained, and no action was taken. The trades' union committee a second time met the Knights of Labor Executive Board, at the Bingham House, in this city, on September 26, and secured promises that definite action would be taken at the Richmond General Assembly, which would lead to harmony between the two organizations.

The trades unions objected to the admission to the Knights of Labor of members who had been suspended, expelled, or rejected for cause by their own organization; they opposed the formation of Knights of Labor assemblies in trades already thoroughyl organized in trades' unions, and complained of the use of Knights of Labor trade-marks or labels, in competition with their own labels, notably so in the case of the Cigar-Makers' International Union. At the Richmond General Assembly, the trades' union chiefs presented a mass of grievances, showing where their local unions had been tampered with by Knights of Labor organizers, where movements had been made to disrupt them, and where, in cases where such disruption could not be effected, antagonistic organizations were formed by the Knights. The General Assembly, however, instead of removing these alleged evils or giving satisfactory redress to the trades' union element, administered to the Federation a slap in the face, as the latter understood it, by passing a resolution compelling the members of Cigar Makers' International Union connected with the Knights of Labor, to withdraw from the order.

The call for the St. Louis Convention of the Federation was then abrogated, and a circular was issued designating Columbus, Ohio, as the place of meeting on December 8. At the same time all organizations not already affiliated with the Federation, were urged to attend a trades' union convention to be held in the same place on the following day. After four days' joint sessions of the bodies, the old Federation of trades' and labor unions was dissolved, and the American Federation of Labor—the result of long thought, mature brains, and arduous toil—was born to the world.

Twenty-five national organizations were blended in it, with an aggregate membership of 316,469 workingmen. A plan of permanent organization was adopted, very simple in its details, and an executive council of five members and chief officers were elected. Resolutions were passed favoring the early adoption of the eight-hour rule, demanding of Congress the passage of a compulsory indenture law, and condemning the Pinkertons' Preventive Patrol, and the Coal and Iron Police. After much deliberation, a constitution was agreed upon, in which the main objects of the great organization were stated to be "the encouragement of formation of local unions, and the closer federation of such societies, through central trade and labor unions in every city, with the further combination of these bodies into State, territorial, and provincial organizations, to secure legislation in the interests of the working masses; the establishment of national and international trades' unions, based upon a strict recognition of the autonomy of each trade, and the promotion and advancement of such bodies; and the aiding and encouragement of the labor press of America."

The revenue of the Federation is derived from a per capita tax of one-quarter of a cent per month for each member in good standing.

It will be seen that the Federation is essentially democratic in principle, and that, unlike its rival, the Knights of Labor, its affairs are conducted in the most frugal and economical manner possible. The second session was held in Baltimore, December 13, 1887.

The American Federation of Labor is numerically the strongest labor organization in the world, even surpassing the Knights of Labor, possessing, as it does, an aggregate membership of 618,000, while that of the Knights is set down officially at 535,000.

Within the period during which the Knights have been retrograding, as far as numbers are concerned, the American Federation, since its formation at Columbus, Ohio, on December 8, 1886, has been noiselessly and rapidly gaining strength and importance.

Since its first inception, following the traditions of the open trades' unions, it has not affected secrecy, and at the same time it has not courted notoriety. Its component parts, previously organized in different form, have given to the world nearly all the ideas that have since been found useful or valuable in other labor organizations, and the brilliant success which has attended this the first years of its existence, bears portent of great achievement in the future. Its roster of national and international trades' unions contains such influential and diverse organizations as these: Bakers' National Union, International Boiler Makers' Union, Cabinet Makers' National Union, Beer Brewers' National Union, International Boatmen's Union, National Union of Coopers, German American Typographia, Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners,

Cigar Makers' International Union, National Federation of Miners and Mine Laborers, Miners and Mine Laborers' Amalgamated Association, Coal Miners' Protective Association, Horse-Collar Makers National Union, Tailors' National Progressive Union, Furniture Workers' National Union, American Flint-glass Workers' Union, Granite Stone-cutters' National Union, Iron Molders' National Union, Amalgamated Association of Iron and Steel Workers, Journeymen Barbers' National Union, Metal Workers' National Union, Brotherhood of Painters and Decorators, Shoelasters' National Union, Custom Tailors' National Union, Textile Workers' Progressive Union of North America, International Typographical Union, Umbrella, Pipe and Cane Workers' Union of America, and the Wood Carvers' National Union.

THE NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONS OF AMERICA.

A Brief Sketch of their Growth, Benefits, and Achievements.

By P. J. McGuire.

To write a full and complete history of each National and International Union, would fill many volumes. To narrate in detail the varied struggles, the sublime and heroic sacrifices, the thrilling episodes, the many strikes, is a task that can not be undertaken in the confines of a small pamphlet. All that we will attempt is to give a brief, concise sketch, a mere outline of the history of each National and International Union. The data is arranged and presented in the successive chronological order of the formation of each society, and has been furnished officially by the officers of the organizations mentioned, to whom we are indebted for the favor. These reports extend, in most cases, up to July 1, 1888.

The International Typographical Union was instituted December 5, 1850, with 14 locals and 6000 members, now numbers over 275 local unions and 24,000 beneficial members, its roll even extending beyond a membership of 35,000. In case of strikes, from $7 to $10 per week is paid, at the option of the local unions. Each local fixes its own sick and funeral benefits. The work is chiefly piece-work. The wages range from 30 cents to 60 cents per thousand ems, and nine to ten hours a day is the prevailing practice. On government work in the Government Printing Office, at Washington, D. C., the union rule is eight hours a day. Wages have been advanced fully 40 per cent. through the International Union.

The International Trade Association of Hat Finishers of America was organized in Philadelphia June 5, 1854, with 12 local unions, and now numbers 15 locals, with 4000 members, and has almost complete control of every hatting centre. The initiation fee is $15, and the monthly dues are 15 cents. Piece-work is universal, and nine hours a day is the limit. The work is done in seasons, known as the "spring trade" and "fall trade." Wages average about $12 per week for the year round; a few make a higher sum. Funeral benefits of from $100 to $130 have been the law, but hereafter the sum of $300 funeral benefit will be paid on the death of a member. The silk and felt hatters were in one organization until 1868, when, in a convention at Newark, N. J., differences arose which led to the separation of the two bodies. Formerly the practice was to strike on the least provocation; now the union committee sits in conference with the Manufacturers' Association, and both work in harmony together.

The National Silk and Fur Hat Finishers Association dates back to the first local organization of the craft formed in Philadelphia in 1836, the National body being formed in July, 1854, and now embraces seventeen cities. No strikes have taken place since the strike of 1859 in New York, which lasted six weeks, costing the society $6000, and resulted favorably. Piece-work is the rule, and the hours of labor are not fixed. One hundred dollars is paid on death of a member, and $50 on decease of a member's wife. Relief for sick members is on the voluntary basis.

Cotton Mule Spinners' Association, located in Fall River, Mass., was instituted October, 1858. The monthly dues are 60 cents, and since the society has started, the hours of labor have been reduced from eleven and twelve hours down

to ten, and the wages increased from $8 per week to $10 per week. The sick benefits are $4 per week, and $50 in case of funeral; $4 per week is paid to members victimized or on strike; $80,000 strike benefits have been paid out since formation of the society, and $40,000 in funeral and sick benefits. The society now has $7000 of a reserve fund.

THE IRON MOLDERS' UNION OF AMERICA was organized by a few unions on July 5, 1859, and now covers over 250 local unions and 28,000 members, of whom fully 20,000 are in benefits. The reserve fund at headquarters is never allowed to fall below $30,000, and the local treasuries have hundreds of thousands at their command. The dues to the general office are 25 cents per month. The burial and strike benefits are paid from this fund. This society pays $100 funeral benefit. When the society first organized, $12 per week was considered good wages; at present the invariable rule is $2.75 per day. They also formerly worked twelve to thirteen hours per day; now the custom is ten hours, and in April, 1889, a general movement for the nine-hour work-day is projected. Piece-work is general, and to restrict the greedy piece-workers, they are limited to do an amount of work not to exceed $3 50 per day. The great strike of March, 1887, against the combined Manufacturers' Defense Association, resulted in a sweeping victory for the union.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE ENGINEERS was instituted August 17, 1863, and at this writing, has 392 sub-divisions and over 25,000 members. Since 1868 this union has paid out to the widows and orphans of its members $2,438,000. The insurance feature is $3000 in case of death, and $1500 in case of permanent disability by accident. Wages have been advanced fully 50 per cent., and the hours of labor have been curtailed considerably.

THE CIGAR-MAKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA was founded June 21, 1864, with 21 unions and 984 members. At present it numbers 260 local unions and over 28,000 members, of whom 21,000 are in benefits. The initiation fee ranges from $3 to $10, according to locality, and the dues are 20 cents per week, and an annual assessment of one dollar. At first the hours of labor were ten hours and longer, now the rule is eight hours a day, while since September, 1879, wages have advanced from twenty to one hundred per cent.; the system of piece-work prevails. A sick benefit of $5 per week is paid, and the union has a funeral benefit ranging from $50 to $500. A system of loans to traveling members is one of the institutions, while $4 per week is paid in case of a strike or lockout. In the past ten years the sum of $883,181.82 has been paid out in various benefits, while the society now has in its funds the sum of over a quarter of a million dollars. This union has broken down the truck system of paying wages in cigars, and has battled against the tenement-house cigar factories, with considerable success.

THE BRICKLAYERS' AND MASONS' INTERNATIONAL UNION OF AMERICA was established February 1, 1865, with 3 unions, and now it embraces over 160 local unions. The initiation fee is from $10 to $25, and the dues from 25 to 50 cents per month. The hours of labor have been reduced from ten down to nine hours per day. Wages are paid by the day, and vary according to location, from $2.50 to $5 per day. In strikes, $200,000 have been spent, and $350,000 more have been expended in other benefits. Strike benefits are at the rate of $7 per week for married men, and $5 per week for single men. Many of the local unions have sick and funeral benefits.

THE ORDER OF RAILWAY CONDUCTORS was organized in 1868, at Mendota, Ill., and now has 8,000 members. It has insurance features and various benefits.

THE UNITED STATES WOOL HAT FINISHERS' ASSOCIATION was formed April 7, 1869, and now embraces 12 locals. All apprentices, on becoming journeymen, are members of the union. The system of work is piece-work, and averages nine months' work in the year, at from $3 to $6 per day, according to a workman's expertness. Over $4000 have been spent in strike benefits. The history of some local unions in this body dates back to 1745.

THE GERMAN-AMERICAN TYPOGRAPHIA was organized in 1873, with 7 locals and 400 members, now it has 9 locals and 1,400 beneficial members. The initiation fee is $3, and the dues 25 cents per week, and more in some cases. Since May 1, 1886, the eight-hour system is the universal rule in all union offices among German printers, where the men formerly worked ten hours and more per day. Wages range from $12 to $20 per week, as the work is principally piece-work. In the past five years wages have advanced 15 to 25 per cent. This society pays $6 per week sick benefit, $6 per week out of work benefit, $7 per week strike benefit, $200 death benefit, and $25 wife funeral benefit, also traveling loans to the extent of $20. This society has a reserve of over $12,000.

THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF FURNITURE WORKERS OF AMERICA was instituted July 7, 1873, with 9 local unions and 1,156 members. At present it numbers 26 locals and over 5,000 members

in good standing. The initiation fee is $1, and 40 cents per month dues, with additional fees and dues for the beneficial features. The union has a reserve of $18,000. The benefits are: $100 wife's funeral benefit, $250 member's funeral benefit, $25 to $150 tool insurance (fully $75,000 worth of tools are insured), sick benefits $6 per week, and $5 per week in case of strikes. In strikes fully $55,000 have been spent, of which $30,000 was expended in the eight-hour strike in May, 1886. About one-half the members are now working by the day, eight hours per day, in most cases, the balance nine hours a day. When the organization started the rule was piece-work, ten hours per day. Wages are now higher than they were three years ago, and range from $1.75 to $3.50 per day.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF LOCOMOTIVE FIREMEN was established December 1, 1873, with 1 local and 9 members; now has 380 divisions and 19,000 beneficial members. The initiation fee is $5 and upwards, and the dues 25 cents per month and upwards. Since the organization was formed, the sum of $190,000 has been paid out in strikes, and $1,500,000 has been expended in funeral benefits. The benefits are $1,500 insurance in case of death, and $1,500 in case of disability.

JOURNEYMEN HORSESHOERS' NATIONAL UNION organized in Philadelphia April 20, 1874, and now has 32 local unions and 8,000 members. The initiation fee is $5, and the monthly dues 50 cents. At first the hours of labor were ten per day, now they range from eight to ten, in many cases nine hours is the average. Wages were $2 to $2.50, at present they are advanced to $3 and $3.50.

THE NATIONAL AMALGAMATED ASSOCIATION OF IRON AND STEEL WORKERS was founded August 4, 1876, with 111 lodges and 3,755 members. It was the outgrowth of a consolidation of various societies of all branches of the trade. The Amalgamated now numbers 177 lodges and over 35,000 members, of whom 15,000 are finely skilled workmen. The initiation fee is $1 to $3, the monthly dues are 50 cents. Wages have advanced over 10 per cent. since the association has been founded. In all, the sum of $228,893 has been spent in strikes. The strike allowance is $4 per week. The first origin of the association dates back to a local lodge in Pittsburgh in 1858, known as the "United Sons of Vulcan." The formation of the Amalgamated has brought about a uniform scale of wages, and the present system of annual scale conferences between the employers and the men through duly constituted representatives.

THE GRANITE CUTTERS' NATIONAL UNION was established March 10, 1877. Wages then were $1.75 to $2 per day for ten hours' work. Now they are $3 to $3.50 per day for nine hours' work, and eight hours Saturdays. The society has 80 branches and 5,000 members. Its initiation fee is from $1 to $3, the monthly dues being 30 cents. The society allows its members $10 of a traveling loan, and $125 funeral benefit.

THE AMERICAN FLINT GLASS WORKERS' UNION came into life July 1, 1878, with 11 local bodies, and at present it embraces 83 local unions and over 6,000 members, with barely 75 men in the trade outside of the union. Local organization of glass workers extends back to 1848. The first general or national union of glass workers was formed in 1856; it afterwards, in 1865, became the "Glass-Blowers' League," which, later on, in the Bottle Blowers' branch, was divided for convenience into two organizations, one the Eastern Division and the other the Western Division. The flint-glass workers and window-glass workers in the course of time withdrew from the league and formed separate organizations, to more effectually regulate their craft affairs. In the glass trade the general rule in most cases is eight hours a day's work, and by organized effort wages have been advanced 100 per cent.

THE NEW ENGLAND BOOT AND SHOE LASTERS' PROTECTIVE UNION was originated December 27, 1879, with 16 members; at present it has 66 branches and nearly 10,000 members, of whom 7,523 members are in benefit. The initiation fee is $1; the monthly dues are 25 cents. The old custom was twelve to thirteen hours' work per day. Now the men work ten hours, and where they formerly made $9 to $10 per week, at present they get $16 per week. The sum of $105,000 has been spent in strikes. The pay, in time of a strike, is $4 per week, the local unions, in some cases, paying sick benefits. This organization has been in upwards of 1,900 trade troubles, and, with a few exceptions, has always come out victorious. It is now extending its ramifications to other sections as well as New England.

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF BOILER-MAKERS AND IRON SHIP-BUILDERS AND HELPERS was formed at Chicago June, 1880, and now has 33 branches and 3,500 members. Initiation fee from $1 to $5; monthly dues 25 to 50 cents per month. The hours of labor are nine hours per day on ships or boats, and ten hours in the shops. Wages, previous to the organization, were $2 to $2.20 per day; at present they are from $2.75 to $3.25. The uni[illegible] has sick and funeral benefits, and th[illegible] not invoking strikes, has won six [illegible] seven strikes in the past few years.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF CARPENTERS AND JOINERS OF AMERICA was founded in convention at Chicago, August 12, 1881. At first it had only 12 local unions and 2,042 members. Now it has 481 local unions in over 445 cities, and 53,000 enrolled members. It pays a wife's funeral benefit from $25 to $50; member's funeral benefit, $100 to $200; disability benefit, $100 to $400. In these general benefits the sum of $53,675 has been expended, while $200,000 more were spent for sick benefits by the local unions. It has raised wages in 268 cities, and placed four millions and a half dollars more wages annually in the pockets of the carpenters in those cities. It reduced the hours of labor to eight hours a day in 25 cities, and nine hours a day in 107 cities, not to speak of 152 cities which have established the eight or nine-hour system on Saturdays. By this means 4,000 men have gained employment. This society favors day's work, and opposes piece-work in the trade, and has broken down the system in many instances. Wages range from $2.25 to $3 50 per day.

THE METAL-WORKERS' UNION OF NORTH AMERICA, founded in 1882, now consists of 12 local unions, with 1,200 members. It has sick and funeral benefits.

THE OPERATIVE PLASTERERS' INTERNATIONAL UNION was founded with 5 locals, in 1882; at present has 20 local unions and 2,300 members, of whom 1,700 are in good standing. Initiation fee varies from $5 to $25, and the dues are 25 to 50 cents per month. The hours worked are generally ten hours per day, with eight hours Saturdays. A few places are working eight and nine hours a day. Previous to organization, wages were $2 to $3 per day for ten hours; now they are $2 to $5 for eight or nine hours per day.

THE NATIONAL WOOD-CARVERS' ASSOCIATION was founded in January, 1883, and now embraces 9 local unions in thrifty condition.

TEXTILE WORKERS' PROGRESSIVE UNION OF AMERICA was organized May 17, 1883, at first under the name of "United Silk Workers." July 16, 1884, the society took its present name, and now has 8 local unions. The Carpet Workers have decided to join this body, which will double the numbers. The great difficulty in organizing this branch of labor is the countless number of women and children working in the mills. The Progressive Union, however, made a gallant fight for the eight-hour system in several cities.

JOURNEYMEN TAILORS' NATIONAL UNION started August, 1883, in Philadelphia, with 5 locals; now has 70. Initiation fee averages $2, and dues 50 cents per month, with $4 per week paid in time of strike. The system of work is all piece-work, with no limit to the hours of labor. Wages average $14 per week. Over $16,000 have been paid out in strikes from local and general funds. Nearly all of the unions have sick and death benefits. A previous attempt at a National Union of Tailors was made in 1865.

THE BROTHERHOOD OF RAILROAD BRAKEMEN was instituted September 23, 1883, with 8 members; now has 260 lodges and 12,000 members. The initiation fee is $8, and the monthly dues average $1.50. The sum of $1,000 is paid in case of death or accident; in this way $500,000 has been paid out in the past five years.

THE JOURNEYMEN BAKERS' NATIONAL UNION was formed in Pittsburgh January 13, 1885, with a few locals; now numbers 72 local unions and 19,000 members. Through its efforts, the hours of labor have been reduced from sixteen down to ten hours per day, and wages raised from $8 to $10 per week; and many evils, such as swindling employment agencies, have been abated. The local unions have sick and funeral benefits in many cases.

THE WAITERS' UNION, organized in New York City January 25, 1885, with 22 members, now has over 1,200 members. When they started there was no limit to the hours of labor and no scale of wages; men then worked fourteen to eighteen hours per day, now work only ten hours. Then labor bureaus were kept by saloon-keepers, who compelled the waiters who were looking for work to spend their money freely. This has been broken up, and the labor bureau is now run by the union. The percentage system is also stopped, and wages are $2.50 per day, instead of $1.25 as formerly.

THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF MINERS AND MINE LABORERS had its birth September 12, 1885, with about 6,000 members; at this date it now embraces fully 25,000 members. The wages were $1.75 to $2.25 per day; now they range from $2 to $2.50. This body is composed of State and Territorial unions, which, in turn, are composed of local unions. Previous to the formation of this Federation, the coal miners had a loose, disconnected string of local unions in perpetual and disorganized strikes. This has given way to an annual wage conference with the mine operators, which results in an amicable settlement of the scale, and strikes are thus avoided. At an early date the nine-hour system is to be put into effect by this society.

THE INTERNATIONAL BOATMEN'S UNION had its origin in February, 1886, and now numbers over 1,000 members.

These boatmen are at work on the various canals of New York and New Jersey. The initiation fee is $5, monthly dues 50 cents. Hours of labor at first were twelve per day; now only ten hours. Prices have been raised from 18 to 25 cents per ton for hauling, and wages formerly $35 per month, are now $50. Spent $4,000 in strike benefits, and raised wages over 35 per cent. The locals have a funeral benefit.

Railroad Switchmen's Mutual Aid Association of N. A. had its beginning March 2, 1886, at Chicago, with 4 locals and 1,000 members; to-day it has 58 locals and nearly 5,000 members. The initiation fee is $6, and the monthly dues $1; $700 are paid in case of death or disability, and $5 per week in case of accident. $100,000 have been paid out in these benefits.

Tailors' Progressive National Union was established August 22–29, 1886, at Brooklyn, N. Y., with 9 unions, and now has 13 unions and 1,500 members. Initiation fee $1, dues 25 cents monthly, and $6 per week strike benefit is paid, the society also has a sick and funeral fund, which is optional, and costs 35 cents per month extra, and $2 for initiation, the sick benefit being $6 per week, and the death benefit $75.

The National Union of the United Brewery Workmen was brought into life August 29, 1886, and now has fifty-one local unions and 2,500 members. At first wages were $45 to $60 per month, for fourteen to eighteen hours of daily labor; now the wages are $60 to $80 per month, payable weekly, for ten hours of daily labor. This Society has spent $80,000 in strikes and has a good record as indomitable workers.

Brotherhood of Painters and Decorators of America was founded March 15–16, 1887, with 13 unions and 500 members; now has 116 local unions and 5,000 members. The initiation fee is $1, and upwards; the dues 25 cents per month, and upwards. The hours of labor range from eight to ten hours per day, nine hours being quite the general rule. The benefits are: wife benefit of $25 to $50; member's funeral, $50 to $100; disability, $50 to $100; strikes, $4 to $5 per week.

Horse-Collar Makers' National Union formed April 5, 1887; now has 21 local unions and nearly 800 members. Hours of labor, ten per day; wages, formerly $1.60 per day, are now advanced to $1.90. The initiation fee is $2 to $3; the dues 50 cents per month.

Pattern-Makers' National League, instituted at St. Louis, May 18, 1887, has 9 unions and nearly 1,000 members. Sick and funeral benefits optional with locals.

Paving Cutters' National Union organized June 1, 1887, at Baltimore, Md., with 11 branches and 500 members; has 36 branches and 1,800 members; pays $100 funeral benefit, and $10 traveling loan.

Journeymen Barbers' National Union came into existence September 5, 1887, and has 8 locals and over 2,500 members. The initiation fee is $2; the dues 40 cents per month. At first the hours of labor were one hundred per week, but are now reduced to eighty-six hours per week. Wages were $9 per week, are now $13 per week. Strike benefits and sick benefits are each $5 per week.

The Building Laborers' National Union was started September 30, 1887, in Worcester, Mass., and now has 30 locals and 8,000 members. Worked ten hours per day for $1.75 prior to organization; now work nine hours per day and eight Saturdays, and gets $2.25 to $2.50.

Journeymen Stone Cutters' Association of North America had its beginning March 1, 1888. Pays $100 funeral benefit, and has sick benefits in the locals. The men work nine hours very generally, and in many cases work only eight hours. This society now numbers over 20 locals.

An Oystermen's National Union is now in process of formation, which will include 11 existing unions, with a combined membership of 800. A sick benefit of $5 per week and $75 death benefit will be embraced in the constitution.

The Silk Workers have a very prosperous National Union, which is now arranging to become part of a general Federation of the Textile Workers, including all operatives in the cotton, woolen, carpet, and silk industries, and to be organized strictly on a trade union basis.

LABOR OMNIA VINCIT.

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

AN APPEAL

To all Local, National, and International Trade Unions in America.

It is now generally admitted by all really educated and honest men that a thorough organization of the entire working class, to render employment and the means of subsistence less precarious by securing an equitable share of the fruits of their toil, is the most vital necessity of the present day.

To meet this urgent necessity, and to achieve this most desirable result, efforts have been made, too numerous to specify, and too divergent to admit of more than the most general classification. Suffice it to say, that those attempts at organization which admittted to membership the largest proportion of others than wage-workers were those which went the most speedily to the limbo of movements that won't move; while, of the surviving experiments, those which started with the most elaborate and exhaustive platforms of abstract principles were those which got the soonest into fatal complications, and soonest became exhausted.

In the face of so many disastrous failures to supply the undoubtedly existing popular demand for a practical means of solving the great problem, the query naturally suggests itself to many: "Which is the best form of organization for the people, the workers?"

We unhesitatingly answer: "The organization of the working people, by the working people, for the working people—that is, the Trade Union."

The Trade Unions are the natural growth of natural laws, and from the very nature of their being have stood the test of time and experience. The development of the Trade Unions, regarded both from the standpoint of numerical expansion and that of practical working, has been marvelously rapid. The Trade Unions have demonstrated their ability to cope with every emergency—economic or political—as it arises.

It is true that single Trade Unions have been often beaten in pitched battles against superior forces of united capital, but such defeats are by no means disastrous; on the contrary, they are useful in calling the attention of the workers to the necessity of thorough organization, of the inevitable obligation of bringing the yet unorganized workers into the Union, of uniting the hitherto disconnected Local Unions into National Unions, and of effecting a yet higher unity by the affiliation of all National and International Unions in one grand Federation, in which each and all trade organizations would be "as distinct as the billows, yet one as the sea."

In the work of the organization of labor, the most energetic, wisest, and devoted of us, when working individually, cannot hope to be successful, but by combining our efforts ALL may. And the combined action of all the Unions when exerted in favor of any one Union will certainly be more efficacious than the action of any one Union, no matter how powerful it may be, if exerted in favor of an unorganized, or a partially organized mass. The Brotherhood of Painters has, within a little more than one year, gained nearly one hundred subordinate Local Unions, and it has been largely enabled to achieve this remarkably rapid growth by the assistance of the Brotherhood of Carpenters, the Tailors, the Cigar Makers, and other affiliated Unions of the American Federation of Labor, thus furnishing another proof, if any further proofs were needed by Union men, that "in union there is strength."

We assert that it is the duty, as it is also the plain interest, of all working people to organize as such, meet in counsel, and take practical steps to effect the unity of the working class, as an indispensable preliminary to any successful attempt to eliminate the evils of which we, as a class, so bitterly and justly complain. That this much desired unity has never been achieved is owing in a great measure to the non-recognition of the autonomy, or the right of self-government, of the several trades. The American Federation of Labor, however, avoids the fatal rock on which previous organizations, having similar aims, have split, by simply keeping in view this fundamental principle, as a landmark which none but the most infatuated would have ever lost sight of.

The rapid and steady growth of the American Federation of Labor, arising from the affiliation of previously isolated, together with newly-formed, National Unions; the establishment of local unions of various trades and callings where none before existed; the spontaneous formation of Federal Labor Unions, composed of wage-workers following various trades in places where there are too few persons employed at any particular one to allow the formation of Local Unions of those trades, thus furnishing valuable bodies of auxiliaries and recruits to existing unions upon change of abode, this steady growth is gratifying evidence of the appreciation of the toilers of this broad land of a form of general organization in harmony with their most cherished traditions, and in which each trade enjoys the most perfect liberty while securing the fullest advantages of united action.

And now, in conclusion, you will permit us to express our acknowledgement of the very moderate amount of governing which has fallen to the lot of those who have the honor to address you. While much of this good fortune must be attributed to the nature of the federal form of our organization, our task has been immeasurably lightened by the assistance of a body of organizers, who, without hope of reward, except the consciousness of performing a sacred duty to their fellow workmen, have carried the propaganda of trade unionism into the remotest parts of the Continent. Much of our burden has been also eased by the generous co-operation of the Executives of National and International Unions, both affiliated and unaffiliated, the latter of whom have doubtless so acted from a conviction that within the lines of the Federation will be fought to the bitter end the fast-coming grand struggle between Capital and Labor, involving the perpetuation of the civilization we have so laboriously evolved. Deeply grateful as we are, for your fraternal support, we should be negligent of the duty we owe to each and all did we not urge the Local, National, and International Unions who have not yet joined the American Federation of Labor, to do so without further delay.

Yours fraternally,

SAMUEL GOMPERS, *President*,
P. J. McGUIRE, *First Vice-President*,
WM. A. CARNEY, *Second Vice-President*,
JOHN B. LENNON, *Treasurer*,
CHRIS. EVANS, *Secretary*.